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Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

First report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

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Note

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Contents

Chapter		*Paragraphs*	*Page*
	Abbreviations		vii
	Preface		ix
I.	**Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001**	1–132	1
	General	1–16	1
	Format	4–12	2
	Methodology	13–16	5
	Analysis of expenditure estimates for the biennium 2000–2001	17–37	6
	Provisions not carried over	20–21	7
	Global conferences	22–23	8
	Delayed impact relating to the reduction of posts in 1999	24	8
	Net increase in the proposed budget	25–30	8
	Recosting	31–37	11
	Proposed allocation of resources and posts in 2000–2001	38	14
	Personnel matters	39–61	14
	Regular budget established and temporary posts	43–48	14
	Temporary assistance and consultants	49–55	21
	Extrabudgetary resources	56–59	25
	Extrabudgetary posts	60–61	27
	Other matters	62–127	30
	Extent of involvement of specialized bodies in the planning and programming process	62–65	30
	“Within available resources”	66–67	32
	Implementation of reforms	68	32
	Publications	69–77	32
	Printing	78–79	34
	Information technology	80–92	35
	Year 2000 compliance	93–94	40
	Travel	95–97	41
	Personnel practices and policies	98–105	42
	Liaison offices	106–107	43

Career development in language services (A/53/919) 108–111 44

Impact of economy measures on the delivery of mandated conference services (A/53/833) 112 45

Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States (A/53/826) 113 45

Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/53/827) 114 45

Construction of additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa and Bangkok (A/53/347/Add.1) 115 46

Comprehensive study of the question of honorariums payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations (A/53/643) 116–121 46

Proposed measures to improve the profitability of the commercial activities of the United Nations (A/53/794) 122–123 47

Impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures (A/53/947) 124 47

Consequences that the increase in the volume of cases before the International Court of Justice has on the operation of the Court (A/53/326 and Corr.1) 125 47

Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses 126 48

Cooperation with other United Nations bodies 127 48

Overall position of the Advisory Committee on the initial estimates for the biennium 2000–2001 .... 128–132 49

II. Detailed recommendations on the proposed programme budget I.1–IS3.5 51

Estimates of expenditure I.1–XIII.2 51

Part I
Overall policy-making, direction and coordination I.1–I.48 51

Section 1. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination I.2–I.25 51

Section 2. General Assembly affairs and conference services I.26–I.48 57

Part II
Political affairs II.1–II.56 61

Section 3. Political affairs II.2–II.17 61

Section 4. Disarmament II.18–II.25 66

Section 5. Peacekeeping operations II.26–II.52 68

Section 6. Peaceful uses of outer space II.53–II.56 73

Part III
International justice and law III.1–III.18 74

Section 7. International Court of Justice III.2–III.10 74

Section 8. Legal affairs III.11–III.18 76

Part IV

International cooperation for development IV.1–IV.90 77
Section 9. Economic and social affairs IV.2–IV.28 77
Section 10. Africa: New Agenda for Development IV.29–IV.31 84
Section 11A. Trade and development IV.32–IV.58 85
Section 11B. International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO IV.59–IV.61 93
Section 12. Environment IV.62–IV.73 93
Section 13. Human settlements IV.74–IV.81 95
Section 14. Crime prevention and criminal justice IV.82–IV.86 96
Section 15. International drug control IV.87–IV.90 97

Part V

Regional cooperation for development V.1–V.97 97
Section 16. Economic and social development in Africa V.17–V.35 100
Section 16A. Regional Commission V.17–V.34 100
Section 16B. Regional Commissions New York Office V.35 103
Section 17. Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific .. V.36–V.53 104
Section 18. Economic development in Europe V.54–V.67 106
Section 19. Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean V.68–V.81 109
Section 20. Economic and social development in Western Asia V.82–V.94 111
Section 21. Regular programme of technical cooperation V.95–V.97 113

Part VI

Human rights and humanitarian affairs VI.1–VI.36 114
Section 22. Human rights VI.2–VI.19 114
Section 23. Protection of and assistance to refugees VI.20–VI.22 117
Section 24. Palestine refugees VI.23–VI.25 118
Section 25. Humanitarian assistance VI.26–VI.36 118

Part VII

Public information VII.1–VII.28 121
Section 26. Public information VII.1–VII.28 121

Part VIII

Common support services VIII.1–VIII.118 129
Section 27A. Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management . VIII.3–VIII.8 129
Section 27B. Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts VIII.9–VIII.16 131
Section 27C. Office of Human Resources Management VIII.17–VIII.34 132

Section 27D. Office of Central Support Services VIII.35–VIII.71 137
Security and safety VIII.38–VIII.40 138
Information technology services and the Integrated Management Information System VIII.41–VIII.55 138
Common services VIII.56–VIII.59 141
Procurement, travel and transportation VIII.60–VIII.63 142
Facilities management VIII.64–VIII.68 143
Archives and records management VIII.69–VIII.71 143
Section 27E. Administration, Geneva VIII.72–VIII.88 145
Section 27F. Administration, Vienna VIII.89–VIII.104 148
Section 27G. Administration, Nairobi VIII.105–VIII.118 153
Part IX
Internal oversight IX.1–IX.10 156
Section 28. Internal oversight IX.1–IX.10 156
Part X
Jointly financed administrative activities and special expenses X.1–X.27 157
Section 29. Jointly financed administrative activities X.2–X.18 157
A. International Civil Service Commission X.7–X.9 160
B. Joint Inspection Unit X.10–X.12 161
C. Information Systems Coordination Committee X.13–X.16 161
D. Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions X.17 162
E. Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions X.18 162
Section 30. Special expenses X.19–X.27 162
Part XI
Capital expenditures XI.1–XI.8 163
Section 31. Construction, alternation, improvement and major maintenance XI.1–XI.8 163
Part XII
Staff assessment XII.1–XII.2 165
Section 32. Staff assessment XII.1–XII.2 165
Part XIII
Development Account XIII.1–XIII.2 165
Section 33. Development Account XIII.1–XIII.2 165
Estimates of income IS1.1–IS3.5 166
Income section 1. Income from staff assessment IS1.1–IS1.3 166
Income section 2. General income IS2.1–IS2.5 166
Income section 3. Services to the public IS3.1–IS3.5 167

Abbreviations

ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
HABITAT	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Computing Centre
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
ITC	International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCO	United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

UNU	**United Nations University**
WFP	**World Food Programme**
WHO	**World Health Organization**
WIPO	**World Intellectual Property Organization**
WTO	**World Trade Organization**

Preface

1. The major functions of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as defined by the General Assembly in its resolution 14 (I) of 13 February 1946, are:

"(a) To examine and report on the budget submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly;

"(b) To advise the General Assembly concerning any administrative and budgetary matters referred to it;

"(c) To examine on behalf of the General Assembly the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies and proposals for financial arrangements with such agencies;

"(d) To consider and report to the General Assembly on the auditors' reports on the accounts of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies".

The Advisory Committee also reports on the financing of peacekeeping operations. In addition, the Advisory Committee reports on administrative budgets and other matters to the governing bodies of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR (voluntary funds), UNEP (Environment Fund), the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, UNIDIR, UNITAR, UNU, WFP, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and UNRWA.

2. Under rule 156 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the members of the Advisory Committee, no two of whom shall be nationals of the same State, shall be selected on the basis of broad geographical representation, personal qualifications and experience.

3. The Advisory Committee has the following membership:

H.E. Mr. C.S.M. **Mselle** (Chairman)

Mr. Leonid E. **Bidny** (Vice-Chairman)

Ms. Denise **Almao**

Mr. Ammar **Amari**

Mr. Ioan **Barac**

Mr. Gérard **Biraud**

Ms. Norma **Goicochea Estenoz**

H.E. Ms. Nazareth M. **Incera**

Mr. Hasan M. **Jawarneh**

H.E. Mr. Ahmad **Kamal**

Mr. Mahamane **Maiga**

H.E. Mr. E. Besley **Maycock**

Mr. Rajat Saha

Mr. Nicholas Thorne

Mr. Fumiaki Toya

H.E. Mr. Giovanni Luigi Valenza

4. The present report contains the conclusions and recommendations arrived at by the Advisory Committee on the basis of the Secretary-General's proposals for the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, supplemented, to the extent possible, by additional information supplied orally or in writing by representatives of the Secretary-General. As in the past, provision is made in certain sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 for expenditures to which some Member States have objections in principle. Some members of the Committee have repeated those objections and stated their reasons therefor. At the same time, the Committee considered that the controversy concerning such items does not fall within the province of the Advisory Committee, which under rule 157 of the rules of procedure is "responsible for expert examination of the programme budget of the United Nations".

C. S. M. Mselle
Chairman

Chapter I

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001

General

1. For the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General proposes a programme budget in the amount of $2,655,362,400 for the expenditure sections and $370,435,700 for the income sections. On a net basis, the estimates for 2000–2001 amount, therefore, to $2,284,926,700. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 53/206 of 18 December 1998 invited "the Secretary-General to prepare his proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 on the basis of a total preliminary estimate of $2,545 million at revised 1998–1999 rates". In the following table, the estimates for 2000–2001 are compared with the revised appropriations for 1998–1999, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 53/215 of 18 December 1998 and 53/219 of 7 April 1999, and with the actual expenditure in the biennium 1996–1997.

Proposed programme budget, 2000–2001
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Actual expenditure and income 1996–1997 (1)[a]	*Revised appropriation 1998–1999 (2)*	*Estimates 2000–2001 (3)*	*Total increase 2000–2001 over 1998–1999*	
				Column (3)–(2) (4)	*Column (4)/(2) percentage (5)*
Expenditure	2 528 750.9	2 529 903.5	2 655 362.4	125 458.9	5.0
Income	446 475.5	362 705.4	370 435.7	7 730.3	2.1
Net	2 082 275.4	2 167 198.1	2 284 926.7	117 728.6	5.4

[a] Excludes International Seabed Authority resources of $3,993,700.

2. The Secretary-General's programme budget proposals for the biennium 2000–2001 cover the regular budget of the Organization. The estimates of extrabudgetary resources that are likely to be available to the United Nations in the coming biennium are also given; updated figures provided to the Advisory Committee for table 1 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget (A/54/6 (Part one) (ii)) indicate a total of $3,659,782,700, comprising $217,001,100 for support, $175,887,900 for substantive activities and $3,266,893,700 for operational activities. The grand total, including the net estimate for the regular budget, is therefore $5,944,709,400.

3. The estimates do not include the costs of peacekeeping operations and the international tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, which are funded separately. The Advisory Committee was informed that for the periods 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998 and 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 actual and projected assessments on Member States in respect of peacekeeping operations, excluding the costs for special missions covered under the regular budget, are expected to total $1,800 million; the revised appropriations for 1998 and initial appropriations for 1999 for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, under General Assembly resolutions 53/212 and 53/213 of 18 December 1998, total $299.3 million.

Format

4. The Advisory Committee notes that the format of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 remains basically unchanged from that of 1996–1997. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that organizational charts have been included, where relevant, for each section of the budget, (see the Committee's first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] para. 37).

5. The Advisory Committee welcomes efforts made by the Secretary-General to better specify enabling resolutions for activities enumerated in the narratives. The Committee also notes with satisfaction the inclusion in the narrative for each section of a summary of follow-up action taken to implement relevant recommendations of the Committee. The Committee also notes that the Secretary-General has provided information on follow-up action taken to implement recommendations of the internal and external oversight bodies. In the next budget submission, the Secretary-General should indicate clearly those recommendations which are still under consideration by the relevant intergovernmental bodies (see the first report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for 1998–1999,[1] para. 40). The Committee points out that, while most of its recommendations and observations have been implemented, there is room for further improvement, as indicated in the paragraphs below and in Chapter II under relevant sections of the budget. As for the presentation of the information on follow-up, it is, in most instances, unnecessarily lengthy. The Committee is of the view that whenever the implementation of recommendations of the Committee or other bodies has already been communicated by the Secretariat in separate reports to the General Assembly, it would suffice just to provide the symbol of the reference document, with a brief indication of the status. No further comments should be made in the context of the budget presentation. For recommendations related to the budget for which no separate report has been prepared, actions taken or to be taken may be indicated in the relevant paragraphs of the narratives. The material on follow-up at the end of each section should then draw attention to the paragraphs of the section narrative containing information on the follow-up actions taken or to be taken with regard to implementing relevant recommendations of the Advisory Committee or other bodies.

6. The Advisory Committee points out that budget narratives could be made more concise and transparent through greater use of graphs, charts and tables. In general terms, information that is easily obtained from graphics should not be repeated in narratives, which should concentrate on an analysis of the information provided so as to justify the estimates. The Committee also reiterates its previously expressed concern that the description of outputs should be made more specific and clearly defined and that appropriate and significant comparative workload indicators should be provided throughout the budget. The narratives should also contain information as to the extent of cooperation between the various structures of the Secretariat to carry out programmes that are implemented by more than one organizational unit. In a related matter, the Committee found the information provided on cooperation with other programmes and agencies to be of little use. In the future, this information should be streamlined and concentrated on how this cooperation promotes implementation of specific outputs.

7. The Committee also believes it would assist and improve the transparency of the budget submission if, in the future, the tables annexed to part one were to include some new "horizontal" tables giving a consolidated, tabular presentation of the following items of expenditure across all sections of the budget:

(a) **Information Technology.** Provision sought for each department or office broken down to show the estimates for systems development, hardware and software equipment, help desk, training and maintenance functions;

(b) **Training.** Provision sought for each department or office;

(c) **Other staff costs.** This object of expenditure, which is shown in tables 4 and 5 of part one should, in a separate table, be broken down by component; specifically, the provision sought for each department or office should be further broken down into amounts requested for (i) temporary assistance for meetings; (ii) temporary assistance to cover maternity and extended sick leave; (iii) supplementary staff for peak workloads or unforeseen special requirements; and (iv) overtime.

8. The Advisory Committee noted that in a number of sections of the proposed programme budget, programme support was not separately identified, but was shown as part of other programmes, such as executive direction and management. The table below supplied by the Secretariat, provides an explanation of those instances.

Section	*Comments*
1. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination	Part A concerns only policy-making organs. Part B, covering executive direction and management, relates to the Secretary-General and four other offices away from Headquarters which receive programme support from sections 16, 27E, 27F and 27G.
4. Disarmament	This is a very small department of 50 people. Support services, provided by one Professional officer assisted by three General Service staff are deemed to be so minimal as not to merit separate presentation by resources.
6. Peaceful uses of outer space	This office of 18 people receives support services from the United Nations Office at Vienna.
10. Africa: New Agenda for Development	This section receives support from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Public Information and ECA. Hence, it has no programme support component of its own.
12. Environment	Support services are provided by the United Nations Office at Nairobi (section 27H).
13. Human settlements	Support services are provided by the United Nations Office at Nairobi (section 27H).
14. Crime prevention and criminal justice	Support services are provided by the United Nations Office at Vienna (section 27G).
21. Regular programme of technical cooperation	Support services are provided by recipient offices of these funds.
23. Protection of and assistance to refugees	The regular budget component of UNHCR is all for administrative purposes and is integrated with the much larger extrabudgetary component, which includes the bulk of programme support resources for UNHCR.
24. Palestine refugees	All programme support resources are drawn from extrabudgetary resources of UNRWA.
27. Management and central support services	All of this section is, by definition, programme support.
28. Internal oversight	Programme support is provided by an Executive Officer assisted by one Administrative Officer integrated within the same organizational unit as the Under-Secretary-General. In light of the limited resources involved, no separate programme support presentation is made.

Section	Comments
29. Jointly financed administrative activities	All these net budgeted activities are, by their nature, programme support.
30. Special expenses	Not applicable — no organizational unit.
31. Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance	Programme support is provided by section 27D.
32. Staff assessment	Not applicable — no organizational unit.
33. Development Account	Programme support will be provided by the recipient offices on the same lines as for section 21.

Notwithstanding the explanation provided above, the Advisory Committee recommends that in future budget submissions, the amount of programme support should be identified for each relevant section.

9. **The Advisory Committee recalls that in paragraph I.2 of its first report on the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999[1] it had requested that a clearer narrative indication of extrabudgetary resources be included in the budget submission in the future and that terms such as "operational projects", "other" and "contractual services" should be properly explained. The proposed programme budget submission does not contain this information. However, on request, the Committee was provided with definitions of the following terms for the classification of extrabudgetary activities in the proposed programme budget:**

(a) **Support activities: backstopping-related activities, usually administrative in nature, such as financial, personnel or central support services;**

(b) **Substantive activities: activities that support or supplement those approved programmes of the United Nations financed by the regular budget;**

(c) **Operational activities: activities that provide assistance to countries; such assistance may take the form of technical cooperation, or relief or other humanitarian projects.**

10. **One feature of the proposed programme budget is the inclusion of statements of expected accomplishments pursuant to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (see para. 31 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Part one) (i))). The Advisory Committee notes that such information has not been provided in all subprogrammes. Moreover, in the opinion of the Advisory Committee, these statements need to be refined as they are very broad and general; as such, they may be difficult to verify. The Committee understands that refinements would be made after guidance has been provided by the relevant intergovernmental bodies.**

11. **As indicated in paragraph 2 of the annex to the introduction (A/54/6 (Part one) (annex)),**

> **"In accordance with regulation 5.6, the Secretary-General would provide the General Assembly with a list of outputs included in the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 which, in his judgement, can be discontinued and as a consequence, not included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001".**

In paragraph 3, it is indicated that

> "In response to resolution 53/207, the table below presents the recurrent outputs that are in the programme budget for the current biennium, but which are not included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, and the justification for exclusion".

However, the extent to which the relevant intergovernmental organs were consulted prior to taking the decision to delete outputs was not clear from the information provided. The Advisory Committee stresses the need to involve the relevant intergovernmental bodies fully in programming decisions.

12. In paragraph 43 of the introduction, reference is made to efficiency measures and the Development Account. It is indicated that it was envisaged that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 would include information relating to efficiency initiatives in each budget section but that "subsequent developments have precluded such a procedure". The Advisory Committee regrets this delay and will revert to the matter on the basis of the envisaged report referred to in paragraph 43 of the introduction.

Methodology

13. As indicated in paragraph 21 of the introduction, the methodology followed for the preparation of the proposed programme budget is the same as that used for the current biennium and endorsed by the General Assembly in section III of its resolution 47/212 A of 23 December 1992.

14. In paragraph 4 of its report on results-based budgeting (A/53/655), the Advisory Committee indicated that it:

> "will undertake a thorough analysis of the Secretary-General's proposals for results-based budgeting when it considers the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 during its spring session in 1999, and will submit its recommendations on results-based budgeting to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. For this purpose, the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General present, as indicated above, the full proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 in the current format, but that he expand his submission of prototype fascicles, utilizing a results-based budgeting format, to more complex budget areas such as political affairs, international cooperation for development, a regional commission and common support services".

In its resolution 53/205, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, "through the Advisory Committee, the prototype fascicles, as recommended by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 4 of its report". In paragraph 8 of the resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, for consideration at its fifty-fourth session, a comprehensive analytical report on results-based budgeting. The Committee was informed that the requested prototype fascicles and analysis would only be available in the autumn of 1999. The Committee regrets this development, as this material will now have to be considered out of context.

15. The Advisory Committee welcomes the inclusion in the proposed programme budget of information on costing standards and unit rates. The Committee notes that cost estimates of general operating expenses are based on certain rates, for example, $8,000 per year for rental of a copying machine, $1,980 per person per year for communications, $1,000 per facsimile machine for two years and $2,000 for each personal computer for the biennium (see para. 16 below), to cover the cost of maintenance of office automation equipment. Unit rates were also used in estimating some requirements for supplies and materials and furniture

and equipment. However, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that apart from staff costs, standard costs are not used consistently. The Committee recommends that the Secretariat start gathering data using the experience gained over a period of two or more bienniums, with a view to developing standards for non-post services. As demonstrated in the budgets for peacekeeping operations, the use of realistic standards, where appropriate, would facilitate considerably the task of budget formulation. Such standards, once established for each duty station, would be used on the basis of experience with "specific costs" and could be revised from time to time as needed on the basis of operational experience.

16. The Advisory Committee is also of the view that the proposed programme budget should contain a better explanation of such standard costs and unit rates as are already being used in cost estimates. For example, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that at Headquarters there were three service levels of maintenance of office automation equipment from which offices were given an option to choose, with the following unit rates (per personal computer for the biennium): $2,000 (includes help-desk services and repair of personal computers/printers, central software distribution, the usage of central high-end local area network (LAN) servers and the provision of a technical focal point); $1,400 (includes help-desk services and repair of personal computers/printers, central software distribution and the usage of central high-end LAN servers); and $700 (includes central software distribution and the usage of central high-end LAN servers). The Committee believes that information should have been included in the proposed programme budget regarding the basis on which the service levels were established and the criteria governing the choice of service level, as well as the extent to which the level of service guaranteed the effective and efficient use of the equipment. Moreover, the costs of service levels should have been fully justified, bearing in mind market developments and recent price trends. In this connection, the Committee requested information on how the service levels had been structured and costed in the current biennium (see chap. II, part VIII below). The Committee considers that in future budget presentations, the Secretary-General should report on the service levels established for each section of the budget where relevant.

Analysis of expenditure estimates for the biennium 2000–2001

17. As noted in paragraph 1 above, expenditure estimates for the biennium 2000–2001 amount to $2,655,362,400 as compared with revised appropriations of $2,529,903,500 for the biennium 1998–1999, approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 53/215 and 53/219. This represents an increase in nominal terms of $125,458,900, or 5.0 per cent (a resource growth of $5.7 million or 0.2 per cent and a recosting increase of $119.8 million). It compares with a decrease of $20,281,100, or 0.8 per cent, for the initial estimates for the biennium 1998–1999 over the revised appropriations for the biennium 1996–1997.

18. The calculation of the level of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 is shown below.

	Thousands of United States dollars	*Percentage*
1998–1999 revised appropriation (General Assembly resolution 53/215)	2 529 903.5	100.0
Resource growth	5 701.4	0.2[a]
Provision for recosting, i.e., projected inflation in 1999, 2000 and 2001 and reinstatement of a uniform Professional vacancy rate	119 757.5	4.8[a]
Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001	2 655 362.4	105.0[a]

[a] Rounded.

19. The resource growth increase of $5,701,400 has been arrived at as follows:

	United States dollars
Provisions not carried over from 1998–1999	(120 246 100)
Delayed impact relating to reduction of posts in 1999	(3 783 600)
Increase in the proposed programme budget	129 731 100
Total	5 701 400

Provisions not carried over

20. Provisions of $120,246,100 not carried over from the biennium 1998–1999 include the following:

Description	*Thousands of United States dollars*
Special missions	100 858.7
Global conferences:	
Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women	133.7
Combating desertification	415.0
Department of Economic and Social Affairs Administrative Unit	189.3
International Court of Justice	573.4
Alterations and improvements	11 091.8
Staff assessment	6 984.2
Total	120 246.1

21. The bulk of items not carried over from the biennium 1998–1999 relate to special missions. A breakdown of the amount of $100.1 million can be found in chapter II below. As can be seen from paragraph 26 below, an amount of $86.2 million has been requested under special missions for 2000–2001.

Global conferences

22. As for global conferences, it is stated in paragraph 5 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget that the total provision for 2000–2001 for major conferences and special sessions, as well as reinforcement of programmes (including the United Nations Office at Nairobi), is estimated at approximately $11.0 million (as compared with an anticipated requirement of $20 million provided in the budget outline for 2000–2001). A breakdown of the estimate of $11 million is provided in the table below.

		United States dollars
1.	World Summit for Social Development	734 200
2.	Special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women	616 700
3.	Human settlements	1 370 600
4.	Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries	563 700
5.	Tenth session of UNCTAD	623 300
6.	World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination	683 100
7.	Tenth United Nations Congress on Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders	847 300
8.	Millennium Assembly	940 500
9.	United Nations Office at Nairobi	2 250 000
10.	Implementation of special session of the General Assembly on Drugs	2 300 000
	Total	10 929 400[a]

[a] The Committee points out that this table does not include resources for the Fourth United Nations Conference on Restrictive Business Practices (see chap. II, sect. IIA below).

23. The Advisory Committee was unable to ascertain the basis for the amount of $20 million contained in the outline; it appears to have been an arbitrary amount. Moreover, if one considers that the total of nearly $4.6 million for items 9 and 10 in the table above are not costs of global conferences, then the difference between the outline amount of $20 million and the remaining estimate of $6.3 million in the proposed programme budget becomes even more pronounced.

Delayed impact relating to the reduction of posts in 1999

24. The delayed impact of the reduction of posts in 1999, which amounts to $3.8 million (see para. 19 above), pertains to the 1998 cost of the 51 posts that were abolished in the second year of the current biennium and therefore not carried forward to the proposed programme budget (see para. 27 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget).

Net increase in the proposed budget

25. The estimates shown under increase in proposed programme budget, at revised 1998–1999 rates, is $129,731,100. The following table gives a breakdown by main object of expenditure of increases and decreases in order of magnitude.

	Thousands of United States dollars
1. **Increases**	
Other expenditures	86 200.0
Posts	22 631.6
Alterations and major maintenance	20 046.3
Contractual services	5 414.4
Travel	2 681.9
Consultants and experts	2 421.3
Furniture and equipment	1 244.0
Grants and contributions	207.2
Hospitality	88.5
Subtotal (1)	**140 935.2**
2. **Decreases**	
General operating expenses	7 110.9
Other staff costs	3 347.7
Supplies and materials	729.5
Non-staff compensation	16.0
Subtotal (2)	**11 204.1**
Total increase (1)–(2)	**129 731.1**

26. The largest increase, an amount of $86.2 million under other expenditures, represents the estimate for special missions in 2000–2001. It will be recalled that an amount of $100.9 million for special missions in 1998–1999 has not been carried over (see para. 21 above). A breakdown of the amount of $86.2 million can be found in chapter II below. The Committee points out that budgeting for special missions in the proposed programme budget is a new procedure, which has been followed pursuant to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 53/206 on the proposed programme budget outline for 2000–2001.

27. The increase under posts is $22,631,600, of which $9,468,800 relates to salaries for established and temporary posts, $4,171,800 is for common staff costs and $8,991,000 is for staff assessment.

28. The Advisory Committee requested information on the components of common staff costs by duty station, which are standard rates expressed as a percentage of salaries for the biennium 1996–1997 (see table on the following page).

Composition of realized common staff costs for 1996–1997 as a percentage of salaries[a]

Duty station	*New York*	*Geneva*	*Bangkok*	*Santiago*	*Mexico*	*Port-of-Spain*	*Addis Ababa*	*Amman*	*Vienna*	*Nairobi*	*International Court of Justice*
Component											
Staff allowances[b]	3.1	4.0	4.4	4.6	5.5	4.8	16.9	18.6	2.5	11.6	2.6
Social security payments[c]	26.1	21.6	24.1	24.3	25.4	22.6	22.4	24.8	23.6	24.7	23.4
Education grants	3.7	3.0	4.8	1.6	2.8	3.0	14.0	11.4	3.3	7.8	1.4
Home leave	1.5	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.0	4.3	1.4	1.3	3.6	0.6
Appointments[d]	0.9	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.3	2.5	2.2	1.2	0.9	2.5	1.2
Separation[e]	4.4	3.2	2.8	3.4	2.1	1.5	4.4	8.3	6.2	4.6	3.3
Other payments[f]	0.6	0.2	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.6	1.0	2.8	0.5	4.4	0.2
Transfer[g]	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.7	1.4	0.1	3.7	14.1	0.3	0.3	0.0
Total (rounded)	**40.4**	**33.7**	**39.4**	**36.2**	**38.6**	**37.1**	**68.8**	**82.6**	**38.5**	**59.6**	**32.7**

[a] Excludes early separation.

[b] Dependency, assignment, hardship, mobility and hazardous duty station allowances.

[c] Contributions to pension, medical insurance and compensatory payments.

[d] Travel on appointment, travel on interview, removal of household effects and insurance on shipments of effects.

[e] Travel on separation, removal of household effects, repatriation grants, commutation of annual leave and termination indemnities.

[f] Rental subsidies, family evacuation travel and taxi fares.

[g] Travel on transfer, assignment grant, removal of household effects, shipment and residential security measures.

29. According to information received, the net decrease under general operating expenses may be broken down as follows:

General operating expenses	*Thousands of United States dollars*
Utilities	(2 281.8)
Office automation equipment and technology	(1 962.2)
Rental and maintenance of premises	(1 834.5)
Miscellaneous services	(1 275.8)
Communications	(367.5)
Maintenance of furniture and equipment	610.9
Total	(7 110.9)

30. The Advisory Committee was informed that the net decrease of $3,347,700 under other staff costs was composed of the following:

Other staff costs	*Thousands of United States dollars*
1. Decreases	
Temporary assistance for meetings	**3 983.6**
After-service health insurance	**2 539.3**
Other personnel-related costs	**145.5**
Daily mission subsistence allowance	**6.0**
Subtotal (1)	**6 674.4**
2. Increases	
Personal service contracts	**2 196.7**
General temporary assistance	**727.0**
Overtime and night differential	**241.8**
Residential security measures	**161.2**
Subtotal (2)	**3 326.7**
Net decrease (1)–(2)	**3 347.7**

Recosting

31. **The total estimate under recosting is $119,757,500. The results of recosting represent adjustments to the estimates at revised 1998–1999 rates in order to recalculate the level of resources at 2000–2001 price levels and the reinstatement of a uniform vacancy rate for Professional posts.**

32. **The elements in recosting are:**

	United States dollars
Reinstatement of a uniform vacancy rate of 5 per cent for Professional posts	**26 484 000**
2000–2001 inflation over 1998 and 1999	**93 273 500**
Total	**119 757 500**

33. **It should be recalled that the difference between the costing of new and continuing posts was dispensed with in the initial estimates of the current budget. Uniform rates — 95 per cent for the Professional category and above and 97.5 per cent for General Service and related categories — were utilized through the initial appropriation of the current biennium. However, the experience in the first year of the biennium of slightly higher than 10 per cent vacancy rate for Professional posts triggered the revision of the rate in the 1998–1999 revised appropriation from 5 per cent to 10 per cent for 1998 only. The cost of the reinstatement of the Professional vacancy rate back to 5 per cent in the first year of the proposed budget is $26 million.**

34. **In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls paragraphs 7 to 12 of section IV of General Assembly resolution 53/214 of 18 December 1998, which deal with vacancy rates and, *inter alia*, request the Secretary-General to achieve a vacancy rate of not more than 5 per cent for posts in the Professional category and above by the end of the biennium 1998–1999. The Committee requested information on the latest vacancy situation and received the table that follows paragraph 35 below. In keeping with the decision of the**

Assembly, the Committee expects that posts will not deliberately be left vacant to provide a cushion for absorbing the costs of special missions and other activities authorized "within available resources".

35. The Advisory Committee also recalls what it stated in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report on the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 (A/53/7/Add.8). The Committee stated its dissatisfaction with the explanation provided for the high vacancy rate in the first performance report of the Secretary-General (A/53/693). The Committee pointed out

> "as it [had] been doing for years, that unless measures are implemented to greatly simplify and streamline personnel procedures, high vacancy levels will continue, with a consequent impact on mandated programmes. Moreover, the Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 23 of section II of its resolution 52/220, reaffirmed that the vacancy rate was a tool for budgetary calculations and should not be used to achieve budgetary savings."

36. The suspension of the delayed recruitment factor, which used to be 50 per cent for the Professional category and above and 35 per cent for new General Service posts and was instituted for the biennium 1998–1999, is proposed to be carried over to 2000–2001. In paragraph 42 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for 1998–1999,[1] the Advisory Committee observed that

> "as the number of 10 new posts proposed for the 1998–1999 is low relative to the total number of existing posts proposed for continuation, the change has only a negligible effect on the level of the overall estimates submitted. Under the circumstances, the Committee will not interpose an objection at this time. However, the matter should be kept under review and the delayed recruitment factor should be reinstituted in future bienniums should there be proposals for large numbers of new posts."

For 2000–2001, the number of new posts proposed is 44 (see para. 44 below). However, the Committee was informed that the time it takes to recruit new staff is coming down from approximately 400 days to a current rate of 300 days; the goal of the Secretariat is to be able to recruit new staff within 100 days. That notwithstanding, it still takes nearly one year to recruit new staff; given the number of new posts requested, the Committee recommends reinstatement of the 50 per cent delayed recruitment factor.

37. The Advisory Committee was informed that the average United Nations operational rates of exchange from January to November 1998 were uniformly applied to 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001, resulting in no change, at this stage, for 2000–2001. The amount of $93.3 million is therefore entirely attributable to a projection of 1998–1999 rates of inflation unchanged to 2000 and then to 2001. In other words, an attempt has not been made to forecast actual rates of inflation for 2000–2001, instead 1998–1999 rates have been used and compounded in each year of the forthcoming biennium. In order to arrive at a forecast of inflation in 1999, adjustments take into account the forecast of movement of post adjustment indices during 1999 for Professional staff; with regard to the General Service, probable cost-of-living adjustments have also been forecast. Those adjustments, net of staff assessment, have resulted in an increase of $71.2 million (see table 4 of the introduction (A/54/6 (Part one) (ii)), comprising $44.8 million for Professional posts (which includes $26,484,000 for the reinstatement of a uniform vacancy rate of 5 per cent for Professional posts) and $26.4 million for General Service and related posts. For staff assessment and non-staff objects of expenditure, inflation adjustments have been projected to 2000 and 2001, resulting in an amount of $48.6 million. The Committee is of the view that the methodology related to recosting is not fully transparent; data should reflect the most up-to-date forecast for the coming biennium based on experience. The Committee points out that, in accordance with established practice, there will be a further recosting in December 1999.

Vacancy statistics of authorized posts under the regular budget (by section) as of 30 April 1999

Section		*Professional*			*General Service*			*Total*		
		Authorized	*Vacant*	*Rate*	*Authorized*	*Vacant*	*Rate*	*Authorized*	*Vacant*	*Rate*
1A.	Overall policy-making, direction and coordination	57	1	1.8	74	0	0.0	131	1	0.8
1B.	General Assembly affairs and conference services	910	37	4.1	956	7	0.7	1 866	44	2.4
2A.	Political affairs	110	14	12.7	85	0	0.0	195	14	7.2
2B.	Disarmament	28	3	10.7	18	1	5.6	46	4	8.7
3.	Peacekeeping operations	46	7	15.2	312	9	2.9	358	16	4.5
4.	Peaceful uses of outer space	13	0	0.0	5	0	0.0	18	0	0.0
5.	International Court of Justice	22	0	0.0	35	2	5.7	57	2	3.5
6.	Legal affairs	79	9	11.4	63	0	0.0	142	9	6.3
7A.	Economic and social affairs[a]	287	42	14.6	230	2	0.9	517	44	8.5
8.	Africa: New Agenda for Development[b]	12	2	16.7	7	0	0.0	19	2	10.5
11A.	Trade and development	227	26	11.5	167	8	4.8	394	34	8.6
12.	Environment	22	1	4.5	17	0	0.0	39	1	2.6
13.	Human settlements	42	0	0.0	24	0	0.0	66	0	0.0
14.	Crime control	18	3	16.7	5	0	0.0	23	3	13.0
15.	International drug control	44	5	11.4	24	0	0.0	68	5	7.4
16.	Economic and social development in Africa	216	47	21.8	346	0	0.0	562	47	8.4
17.	Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	171	18	10.5	297	16	5.4	468	34	73
18.	Economic development in Europe	114	3	2.6	81	1	1.2	195	4	2.1
19.	Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean	181	10	5.5	310	12	3.9	491	22	4.5
20.	Economic and social development in Western Asia	103	23	22.3	163	6	3.7	266	29	10.9
22.	Human rights	89	14	15.7	52	9	17.3	141	23	16.3
23.	Protection of and assistance to refugees	89	2	2.2	131	2	1.5	220	4	1.8
24.	Palestine refugees	82	5	6.1	10	0	0.0	92	5	5.4
25.	Humanitarian assistance	33	4	12.1	17	3	17.6	50	7	14.0
26.	Communications and public information	261	15	5.7	469	7	1.5	730	22	3.0
27.	Administrative services	312	24	7.7	1 193	20	1.7	1 505	44	2.9
28.	Internal oversight	56	7	12.5	26	1	3.8	82	8	9.8
	Subtotal	**3 624**	**322**	**8.9**	**5 117**	**106**	**2.1**	**8 741**	**428**	**4.9**
Income section 3. Services to the public		24	3	12.5	110	3	2.7	134	6	4.5
	Subtotal	**24**	**3**	**12.5**	**110**	**3**	**2.7**	**134**	**6**	**4.5**
	Grand total	**3 648**	**325**	**8.9**	**5 227**	**109**	**2.1**	**8 875**	**434**	**4.9**

[a] Section 9 of the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001.

[b] Section 10 of the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001.

Proposed allocation of resources and posts in 2000–2001

38. As presented in paragraphs 9 and 14 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget (A/54/6 (Part one) (i)), the distribution of the expenditure estimates and posts for the bienniums 1998–1999 and 2000–2001 by budget part is illustrated in the table below.

Personnel matters

39. The staffing resources available for carrying out the work programme of the Organization include established posts, temporary posts, temporary assistance, consultants and ad hoc expert groups; these resources are financed from the regular budget and from extrabudgetary funds.

40. As shown in table 5 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Part one) (ii)), the Secretary-General estimates posts ($1,464,742,800) and other staff costs ($158,315,500) (excluding staff assessment) at $1,623,058,300 under the expenditure sections for 2000–2001. If the estimate of $26,757,700 (net of staff assessment) for posts and other staff costs is added for income section 3, the total is $1,649,816,000.

41. In table 9 of the introduction, the Secretary-General estimates posts and other staff costs of extrabudgetary staff at approximately $1,260,739,200, including staff financed from the support account for peacekeeping operations. It can thus be said that personnel costs to be financed from the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources would amount to an estimated $2,910,555,200 in 2000–2001.

42. The Advisory Committee points out that data contained in the report of the Board of Auditors for the biennium ended 31 December 1997[2] indicates that out of a total revised appropriation of $2,542.1 million some $2,048.5 million, or approximately 80 per cent, are for salaries and common staff costs.

Regular budget established and temporary posts

43. Under the expenditure sections and income section 3 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General requests a total of 8,933 posts. In the following table, which includes income section 3, Services to the public, the request for 2000–2001 is compared with the approved staffing table for 1998–1999 (see also table 6 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget).

Proposed allocation of resources and posts in 2000–2001

Budget part		Resources (Thousands of United States dollars)				Established and temporary posts			
		1998–1999		2000–2001		1998–1999		2000–2001	
		Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
I.	Overall policy-making, direction and coordination	468 995.0	18.5	489 903.2	18.4	1 997	22.8	2 000	22.8
II.	Political affairs	239 568.3	9.5	241 623.4	9.1	617	7.1	619	7.0
III.	International justice and law	53 108.8	2.1	57 562.8	2.2	199	2.3	205	2.3
IV.	International cooperation for development	266 728.5	10.5	283 464.3	10.7	1 126	12.9	1 134	12.9
V.	Regional cooperation for development	355 924.8	14.1	381 190.5	14.4	1 982	22.6	1 991	22.6
VI.	Human rights and humanitarian affairs	125 271.6	5.0	132 459.5	5.0	503	5.8	514	5.8
VII.	Public information	135 574.0	5.4	145 734.0	5.5	730	8.4	730	8.3
VIII.	Common support services	446 297.8	17.6	460 086.6	17.3	1 505	17.2	1 522	17.3
IX.	Internal oversight	17 941.5	0.7	2 079.9	0.8	82	0.9	87	1.0
X.	Jointly financed administrative activities and special expenses	58 508.5	2.3	62 340.2	2.3				
XI.	Capital expenditures	34 173.1	1.4	45 653.7	1.7				
XII.	Staff assessment	314 746.6	12.4	322 199.3	12.1				
XIII.	Development Account	13 065.0	0.5	13 065.0	0.5				
	Total	**2 529 903.5**	**100.0**	**2 655 362.4**	**100.0**	**8 741**	**100.0**	**8 802**	**100.0**

	Professional category and above			*General Service and related categories*			*Total*		
	2000–2001	*1998–1999*	*Increase (decrease)*	*2000–2001*	*1998–1999*	*Increase (decrease)*	*2000–2001*	*1998–1999*	*Increase (decrease)*
Established posts	3 707	3 640	67	5 215	5 224	(9)	8 922	8 864	58[a]
Temporary posts	5	5	0	6	6	0	11	11	0
Total	3 712	3 645	67	5 221	5 230	(9)	8 933	8 875	58[a]

[a] The increase under expenditure sections is 61; the net figure of 58 takes into account a reduction of 3 posts (1 Professional and 2 General Service) under income section 3 for 2000–2001.

44. As can be seen from table 7 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001, the net increase of 61 regular budget established and temporary posts under the expenditure sections is the result of proposals for:

New posts	44
Conversion from general temporary assistance	36
Abolitions	(19)
Net increase	61

45. The Advisory Committee requested information on regular budget redeployment of posts. The total of 547 redeployments between programmes and subprogrammes within sections and the transfer of one P-4 from management and central support services to General Assembly affairs and conference services are shown in the table below entitled "Redeployments in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001".

46. As shown in paragraph 16 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget, the proposals for 30 reclassifications are detailed in the table below entitled "Reclassifications for the biennium 1998–1999 and proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 under the regular budget".

Redeployments in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001

Budget section		*Professional category and above*									*General Service and related categories*							
		USG	*ASG*	*D-2*	*D-1*	*P-5*	*P-4*	*P-3*	*P-2/1*	*Sub-total*	*Principal level*	*Other level*	*Security Services*	*Field Service*	*Trades and Crafts*	*Local level*	*Sub-total*	*Total*
2.	General Assembly affairs and conference services	–	1	–	–	1	3	3	1	9	2	12	–	–	–	–	14	23
4.	Disarmament	1	–	1	–	1	1	–	–	4	–	2	–	–	–	–	2	6
5.	Peacekeeping operations	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	1	3	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	4
9.	Economic and social affairs	–	–	–	–	1	2	1	1	5	–	12	–	–	–	–	12	17
11A.	Trade and development	–	–	–	1	1	2	1	1	6	2	1	–	–	–	–	3	9
12.	Environment	–	–	2	–	4	4	1	1	12	–	4	–	–	–	6	10	22
13.	Human settlements	–	–	1	1	2	7	4	4	19	–	–	–	–	–	7	7	26
15.	International drug control	–	–	–	–	1	3	1	1	6	1	4	–	–	–	–	5	11
16.	Economic and social development in Africa	–	–	–	7	14	17	18	11	67	–	–	–	–	–	73	73	140
17.	Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	–	–	–	1	1	2	4	2	10	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	14
18.	Economic development in Europe	–	–	–	2	1	3	4	5	15	–	5	–	–	–	–	5	20
19.	Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean	–	–	–	–	3	3	2	1	9	–	–	–	–	–	6	6	15
20.	Economic and social development in Western Asia	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	4	–	–	–	–	–	7	7	11
22.	Human rights	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
23.	Protection of and assistance to refugees	–	–	–	–	3	2	2	2	9	–	3	–	–	–	–	3	12
25.	Humanitarian assistance	–	–	–	–	2	–	2	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5
26.	Public information	–	–	–	–	2	2	3	1	8	–	3	–	–	–	–	3	11
27.	Management and central support services	–	–	–	4	5	9	7	5	30	11	96	–	1	21	40	169	199
28.	Internal oversight	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	1
	Total	1	1	4	17	44	63	54	39	223	16	144	–	1	21	143	325	548

Reclassifications for the biennium 1998–1999 and proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 under the regular budget

Budget section and organizational unit	*Professional category and above*								*General Service and related categories*					
	USG	*ASG*	*D-2*	*D-1*	*P-5*	*P-4*	*P-3*	*P-2/1*	*Principal level*	*Other level*	*Security Services*	*Field Service*	*Trades and Crafts*	*Local level*
1. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination														
Executive Office of the Secretary-General						1 P-2 to P-3								
	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. General Assembly affairs and conference services														
Copy Preparation and Proofreading Section, Headquarters							4 P-2 to P-3							
	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	(4)	–	–	–	–	–	–
4. Disarmament														
Disarmament Affairs, Headquarters						1 P-5 to D-1								
	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
6. Outer space affairs														
Office for Outer Space Affairs						1 P-3 to P-4								
	–	–	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
8. Legal affairs														
Treaty sections						1 P-2 to P-3								
	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–
9. Economic and social affairs														
Division for Sustainable Development						2 P-3 to P-4								
	–	–	–	–	–	2	(2)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
16. Economic and social development in Africa														
Human resources and systems management						1 P-3 to P-4								
	–	–	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
17. Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific														
Conference services						1 P-4 to P-5								
Administration and common services						1 Field Service to P-4								
	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	(1)	–	–

	Professional category and above								General Service and related categories					
Budget section and organizational unit	*USG*	*ASG*	*D-2*	*D-1*	*P-5*	*P-4*	*P-3*	*P-2/1*	*Principal level*	*Other level*	*Security Services*	*Field Service*	*Trades and Crafts*	*Local level*
18. Economic development in Europe														
Executive direction and management						1 P-3 to P-4								
Environment						1 P-3 to P-4								
Energy						1 P-3 to P-4								
Administration and common services						1 P-4 to P-5								
	–	–	–	–	1	2	(3)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
19. Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean														
Economic and Development Division						1 Local level to P-2								
International Trade and Development Finance Division						1 Local level to P-2								
Statistics and Economic Projections Division						1 Local level to P-2								
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	(3)
20. Economic and social development in Western Asia														
Administration and common services						1 P-3 to P-4								
	–	–	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
22. Human rights														
Right to development, research and analysis						1 GS (OL) to GS (PL)								
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–
26. Public information														
Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information						1 P-5 to D-1								
	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
27D. Office of Central Support Services														
Archives and Records Management Section, Headquarters						1 P-3 to P-4								
	–	–	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
27E. Administration, Geneva														
Electronic Services Section						1 P-3 to P-4								
	–	–	–	–	–	1	(1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

	Professional category and above								General Service and related categories					
Budget section and organizational unit	*USG*	*ASG*	*D-2*	*D-1*	*P-5*	*P-4*	*P-3*	*P-2/1*	*Principal level*	*Other level*	*Security Services*	*Field Service*	*Trades and Crafts*	*Local level*
27F. Administration, Vienna														
Human Resources Management Service							**1 P-3 to P-4**							
Electronic Support Unit, Support Section							**1 P-4 to P-5**							
							1 GS (OL) to GS (PL)							
	–	**–**	**–**	**–**	**1**	**–**	**(1)**	**–**	**1**	**(1)**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
27G. Administration, Nairobi														
Information Technology Service							**1 Field Service to P-3**							
	–	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**1**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**(1)**	**–**	**–**
28. Internal oversight														
Office of the Under-Secretary-General							**1 P-5 to D-1**							
	–	**–**	**–**	**1**	**(1)**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**

47. The specific comments of the Advisory Committee on proposals for reclassification are contained in chapter II below.

48. The percentage distribution of established posts by grade in the Professional category and above proposed by the Secretary-General for 2000–2001 shows a slight strengthening at the P-3/4 level as compared with the revised 1998–1999 appropriation as follows:

Professional category and above	*2000–2001*	*1998–1999*
Deputy Secretary-General	–	–
USG/ASG	1.2	1.2
D-2	2.0	2.1
D-1	7.0	7.0
P-5	18.5	18.5
P-4	30.6	30.4
P-3	28.9	28.8
P-2/1	11.8	12.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

The Advisory Committee reiterates the concern it expressed in paragraph 77 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999[1] regarding the continued low proportion of junior-level posts and the need to revitalize and rejuvenate the international civil service. The Committee strongly believes that the most urgent steps need to be taken in this area, which is critical to the future of the Organization. In this connection, the Committee recalls section IX of General Assembly resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999. The Committee points out that the report of the Secretary-General on post structure of the Secretariat (A/53/955) was not issued until after it had completed its consideration of the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001.

Temporary assistance and consultants

49. As can be seen from table 5 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget, the expenditure sections of the proposed programme budget include a total of $158.3 million under other staff costs in 2000–2001. The Advisory Committee was informed that this total included $38 million for general temporary assistance. As a rule, the greatest use of general temporary assistance is for additional staff during periods of peak workload; general temporary assistance is also used for the replacement of staff on prolonged sick leave or maternity leave.

50. The Advisory Committee requested a breakdown of general temporary assistance resources proposed by section and was provided with the table below.

Temporary assistance resources
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Section		*1998–1999 appropriation*	*Resource growth Amount*	*Recosting*	*2000–2001 estimates*
1.	**Overall policy-making, direction and coordination**	820.0	282.8	51.9	1 154.7
2.	**General Assembly affairs and conference services**	2 463.8	63.6	107.0	2 634.4
3.	**Political affairs**	43 894.3	(43 153.4)	35.8	776.7
4.	**Disarmament**	148.9	93.5	11.3	253.7
5.	**Peacekeeping operations**	3 690.7	891.1	453.6	5 035.4
6.	**Peaceful uses of outer space**	45.9	(8.0)	1.2	39.1
7.	**International Court of Justice**	186.0	78.9	12.3	277.2
8.	**Legal affairs**	341.4	(76.6)	12.9	277.7
9.	**Economic and social affairs**	1 048.8	765.8	88.3	1 902.9
10.	**Africa: New Agenda for Development**	209.4	20.0	11.1	240.5
11A.	**Trade and Development**	943.5	334.7	23.2	1 301.4
12.	**Environment**	60.8	0.0	2.3	63.1
13.	**Human settlements**	164.1	274.0	21.3	459.4
14.	**Crime prevention and criminal justice**	311.4	45.6	10.8	367.8
15.	**International drug control**	360.6	65.9	12.9	439.4
16.	**Economic and social development in Africa**	1 090.9	93.4	57.6	1 241.9
17.	**Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific**	201.6	159.8	52.4	413.8
18.	**Economic development in Africa**	141.0	0.0	2.6	143.6
19.	**Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean**	1 278.7	205.9	160.1	1 644.7
20.	**Economic and social development in Western Asia**	72.0	249.4	32.3	353.7
22.	**Human rights**	2 767.1	(81.3)	49.5	2 735.3
23.	**Protection of and assistance to refugees**	1 757.2	0.0	31.8	1 789.0
24.	**Palestine refugees**	23.6	0.0	1.2	24.8
25.	**Humanitarian assistance**	345.4	204.0	18.7	568.1
26.	**Public information**	3 538.7	209.3	168.8	3 916.8
27.	**Management and central support services**	12 919.2	(3 562.8)	384.1	9 740.5
28.	**Internal oversight**	97.3	27.2	6.0	130.5
	Total	**78 922.3**	**(42 817.2)**	**1 821.0**	**37 926.1**

51. As can be seen from the table above, the estimates for general temporary assistance appear to have been reduced by some $42.9 million from the 1998–1999 appropriation of $78.9 million. However, the net decrease is largely attributable to a reduction of $43.2 million under section 3, as shown in the table below.

General temporary assistance in the Department of Political Affairs

	Thousands of United States dollars
Executive direction and management	26.2
Programme of work	206.2
Programme of support	158.4
Special political missions:	
Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan	(4 161.0)
Central American peace process	(355.8)
United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala	(23 013.9)
Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH)	(6 768.6)
Mission to Burundi	(1 883.9)
Secretary-General's Special Representative in Cambodia	(1 058.9)
United Nations Political Office in Somalia	(1 394.9)
Special Envoy to Sierra Leone	(324.3)
Controversy between Guyana and Venezuela	(18.2)
United Nations Office in Bougainville	(1 022.8)
Personal Representative to East Timor	(82.8)
United Nations Office in Liberia	(2 033.6)
Special Envoy to Africa	(186.4)
Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region in Africa	(1 239.1)
Total	**(43 200.0)**

A decrease of $3.6 million is shown under section 27. This is mainly due to the conversion of IMIS general temporary assistance at Headquarters to established posts ($5.8 million), offset by the establishment of IMIS maintenance resources in various offices and of 34 local security officer positions in Nairobi. Most of the other sections show increases for general temporary assistance. In this regard, the Advisory Committee cautions that general temporary assistance should not be used to compensate for reductions in established posts.

52. In a related matter, the Advisory Committee noted a number of instances where staff requirements of a continuing nature had been met or were proposed to be met through general temporary assistance rather than a request for temporary or established posts. The table below was provided at the request of the Committee.

General temporary assistance for specific positions (posts) in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001[a]

	USG	ASG	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2/1	GS	SS	FS	LL	Total
Section 5											
Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (para. 5.73)					3	1	1	2	3	15	25
Section 16											
ECA (para. 16A.128)				1						1	2
Subregional development centres (para. 16A.117)								24			24
Section 17											
ESCAP (para. 17.115)				1						1	2
Section 19											
ECLAC (para. 19.154)				1						1	2
Section 20											
ESCWA (para. 20.64)				1						1	2
Section 22											
Human rights: Rwanda (para. 22.81)					1					1	2
Human rights: Cambodia (para. 22.81)					1					18	19
Section 27B											
Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts (para. 27B.6)			1	1	1		1				4
Section 27C											
Office of Human Resources Management (para. 27C.25)					1	1	2				4
Section 27E											
United Nations Office at Geneva (para. 27E.40)				1							1
Section 27F											
United Nations Office at Vienna (para. 27F.45)				1			1				2
Section 27G											
United Nations Office at Nairobi (paras. 27G.34 and 36)				1				34		1	36
Total	**0**	**0**	**1**	**8**	**7**	**2**	**5**	**60**	**3**	**39**	**125**

[a] **Does not include positions financed under general temporary assistance for non-recurrent activities, such as the Millennium Assembly (para. 1.56).**

The Committee regrets that despite its previous observations, general temporary assistance continues to be used for purposes other than those for which it is intended. The Committee reiterates that the use of general temporary assistance should be strictly limited to requirements for peak workload and maternity and sick leave. The Committee requests that specific information be provided to the General Assembly early at its fifty-fourth session on the disposition of the resources shown in the table above, with proposals for either temporary or established posts or an explanation of why continued use of general temporary assistance would be necessary.

53. The Advisory Committee was informed that the overall estimate for temporary assistance for meetings for 2000–2001 was $38.9 million. The estimate included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 was $41.4 million. These funds are requested for short-term interpreters, translators, typists and other conference-servicing staff.

54. As can be seen from table 5 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget, the total request for consultants and expert groups is $18.6 million for 2000–2001, as compared with $16 million for 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee was informed that, of the total of $18.6 million, $10.7 million relates to consultants. The Committee recalls its previous recommendations that recourse to consultants only be made where the necessary expertise is not available "in-house". The Committee stresses the importance of strict adherence to General Assembly resolution 53/221.

55. The Advisory Committee has requested information on the number of personnel with permanent contracts assigned to peacekeeping or other field missions, the number of Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General posts in the United Nations and its programmes in 1989 as compared with 1999 and the percentage of permanent and fixed-term contracts in 1989 as compared with 1999. The Committee was not provided with this information, which it has been seeking, without response, since 1997. The Committee requests that this information be provided to the General Assembly before it completes consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

Extrabudgetary resources

56. Estimates of extrabudgetary resources are shown, for information purposes, in the proposed programme budget account for a significant portion of United Nations expenditures. The table below shows that the bulk of extrabudgetary resources are from UNHCR, UNRWA, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat).

Extrabudgetary resources 2000–2001

	Percentage of total	Amount (Thousands of United States dollars)
A. Programmes with separate governing bodies		
UNHCR		**1 684 378.2**
UNRWA		**772 786.0**
United Nations International Drug Control Programme		**213 416.4**
UNEP		**182 709.4**
Human settlements		**89 704.9**
Subtotal	**80.5**	**2 942 994.9**
B. Technical cooperation funds		
UNDP		**172 482.7**
UNFPA		**11 537.8**
Other sources		**227 259.0**
Subtotal	**11.2**	**411 279.5**
C. Reimbursement for support/services provided		
Support for peacekeeping operation activities		**81 697.1**
Technical cooperation activities		**2 755.6**
United Nations organization		**79 694.7**
Trust funds		**31 398.7**
Subtotal	**5.3**	**195 546.1**
D. Substantive trust funds	**3.0**	**109 962.2**
Total	**100.0**	**3 659 782.7**

57. The Advisory Committee reviews and submits reports on the related administrative budgets to the governing bodies of the various programmes mentioned in A and B of the table above (see the preface above). For the most part, the Committee examines other extrabudgetary resources maintained in special accounts in the context of its review of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget. The Committee also receives information biannually on the status of trust funds. As indicated in paragraph 61 below, under the terms of section II, paragraph 2, of General Assembly resolution 35/217 of 17 December 1980, the Committee considers proposals for all new posts at levels D-1 and above funded through extrabudgetary sources that are not otherwise subject to scrutiny by an intergovernmental body; similarly, all such extrabudgetary posts are to be managed with the same degree of care as is exercised with regular budget posts. The Committee follows up on this when it reviews trust funds.

58. The Advisory Committee recommends that in future presentations, the Secretary-General should, whenever feasible, provide broad explanations of variances in projected extrabudgetary resources. Further, summary requirement tables for each programme should show percentages for regular budget and extrabudgetary resources.

59. In chapter II below, the Advisory Committee has, where relevant, pointed to the mix of both regular budget and extrabudgetary funding which is available to carry out certain

programmes. In this connection, the Committee has noted that this mix is not referred to consistently throughout all relevant sections; this should be corrected in the next proposed programme budget.

Extrabudgetary posts

60. The numbers and grades of posts anticipated during 2000–2001 for extrabudgetary support services are provided in table 10 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget. As can be seen from the table below, which was provided to the Advisory Committee, it is estimated that extrabudgetary resources in 2000–2001 will finance a total of 6,632 extrabudgetary posts, as compared with 7,613 for 1998–1999. The total initially estimated for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 was 7,622. The Committee was informed that the total for extrabudgetary posts included posts for support services and substantive activities (including posts financed from operational funds at established United Nations offices and posts financed from the support account for peacekeeping operations). The following table provides a breakdown of those posts by source of funds and compares the estimated total for 2000–2001 with the total number of those posts in 1998–1999.

Extrabudgetary posts by source of funds

Budget section	*Support*	*Substantive*	*Operational*	*Total*
Part I				
Overall policy-making, direction and coordination				
1. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination				
1998–1999	4	–	–	4
2000–2001	4	–	–	4
2. General Assembly affairs and conference services				
1998–1999	10	11	–	21
2000–2001	11	11	–	22
Part II				
Political affairs				
4. Disarmament				
1998–1999	–	2	–	2
2000–2001	–	2	–	2
5. Peacekeeping operations				
1998–1999	279	17	–	296
2000–2001	287	18	–	305
Part III				
International justice and law				
8. Legal affairs				
1998–1999	16	–	–	16
2000–2001	16	–	–	16

Budget section	*Support*	*Substantive*	*Operational*	*Total*
Part IV				
International cooperation for development				
9. Economic and social affairs				
1998–1999	**25**	**12**	**18**	**55**
2000–2001	**26**	**3**	**9**	**38**
10. Africa: New Agenda for Development				
1998–1999	**–**	**7**	**1**	**8**
2000–2001	**–**	**4**	**1**	**5**
11. Trade and development				
1998–1999	**18**	**8**	**2**	**28**
2000–2001	**18**	**8**	**2**	**28**
12. Environment				
1998–1999	**53**	**106**	**266**	**425**
2000–2001	**33**	**77**	**381**	**491**
13. Human settlements				
1998–1999	**16**	**51**	**89**	**156**
2000–2001	**22**	**59**	**21**	**102**
14. Crime prevention and criminal justice				
1998–1999	**–**	**13**	**3**	**16**
2000–2001	**–**	**10**	**3**	**13**
15. International drug control				
1998–1999	**17**	**244**	**57**	**318**
2000–2001	**17**	**242**	**72**	**331**
Part V				
Regional cooperation for development				
16. Economic and social development in Africa				
1998–1999	**38**	**–**	**32**	**70**
2000–2001	**37**	**–**	**23**	**60**
17. Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific				
1998–1999	**45**	**–**	**25**	**70**
2000–2001	**40**	**–**	**11**	**51**
18. Economic development in Europe				
1998–1999	**2**	**–**	**7**	**9**
2000–2001	**2**	**–**	**3**	**5**
19. Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean				
1998–1999	**19**	**–**	**23**	**42**
2000–2001	**18**	**–**	**18**	**36**
20. Economic and social development in Western Asia				
1998–1999	**–**	**–**	**13**	**13**
2000–2001	**–**	**–**	**1**	**1**

Budget section	*Support*	*Substantive*	*Operational*	*Total*
Part VI				
Human rights and humanitarian affairs				
22. Human rights				
1998–1999	14	17	20	51
2000–2001	23	8	2	33
23. Protection of and assistance to refugees				
1998–1999	–	–	5 056	5 056
2000–2001	–	–	4 108	4 108
24. Palestine refugees				
1998–1999	–	–	29	29
2000–2001	–	–	20	20
25. Humanitarian assistance				
1998–1999	42	79	212	333
2000–2001	47	91	174	312
Part VII				
Public information				
26. Public information				
1998–1999	–	27	–	27
2000–2001	–	25	–	25
Part VIII				
Common support services				
27. Management and central support services				
A. Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management				
1998–1999	15	–	–	15
2000–2001	15	–	–	15
B. Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts				
1998–1999	110	6	–	116
2000–2001	108	6	–	114
C. Office of Human Resources Management				
1998–1999	25	–	–	25
2000–2001	23	–	–	23
D. Office of Central Support Services				
1998–1999	86	–	–	86
2000–2001	82	–	–	82
E. Administration, Geneva				
1998–1999	73	–	–	73
2000–2001	75	–	–	75
G. Administration, Nairobi				
1998–1999	219	–	–	219
2000–2001	275	–	–	275

Budget section	*Support*	*Substantive*	*Operational*	*Total*
Part IX				
Internal oversight				
28. Internal oversight				
1998–1999	34	–	–	34
2000–2001	40	–	–	40
Grand total				
1998–1999	**1 160**	**600**	**5 853**	**7 613**
2000–2001	**1 219**	**564**	**4 849**	**6 632**

61. In accordance with the terms of section II, paragraph 2, of General Assembly resolution 35/217, the Advisory Committee, since submitting its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] has concurred with the following requests by the Secretary-General concerning the continuation of extrabudgetary posts at the D-1 level and above:

(a) One D-2 post in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict;

(b) One D-1 post for the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women for two years (from 25 March 1999);

(c) One Assistant Secretary-General post for the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, subject to review for the period after 31 December 1999.

Other matters

Extent of involvement of specialized bodies in the planning and programming process

62. In section II, paragraph 3, of its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, the General Assembly resolved to achieve improvement in the consultative process for the formulation of the medium-term plan through, *inter alia*, full implementation of the Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation pertaining to the medium-term plan, as contained in the annex to its resolution 37/234 of 21 December 1982 (this was subsequently revised by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/207 of 18 December 1998), and of the related Rules.

63. As stated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 81 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988–1989,[3] such implementation calls for greater involvement of the specialized bodies in the planning and programming process; the work of such bodies in this area affects the programme of activities that forms the basis of the medium-term plan and, in turn, the programme budget. In this connection, the Committee was provided with the following list of specialized bodies and the period during which they reviewed their programmes of work for 2000–2001:

Budget sections for which the programme of work for 2000–2001 has been reviewed by specialized bodies

Section	*Programme/subprogramme*	*Reviewing body*	*Time of review*
7	International Court of Justice	Budgetary and Administrative Committee of the Court	December 1998
9	Economic and social affairs		
	Gender issues and advancement of women	Commission on the Status of Women	March 1999
	Social policy and development	Commission on Social Development	February 1999
	Population	Commission on Population and Development	March 1999
	Statistics	Statistical Commission	March 1999
	Sustainable development	Commission on Sustainable Development	April 1999
	Public economics and public administration	Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance	May 1999
11	Trade and development	Working Party and Trade and Development Board	January 1999 May 1999
12	Environment	Government Council of UNEP	February 1999
13	Human settlements	Commission on Human Settlements	May 1999
14	Crime control	Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice	April/May 1999
15	International drug control	Commission on Narcotic Drugs	March 1999
16	Economic and social development in Africa	ECA Conference of Ministers	May 1999
17	Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	ESCAP	April 1999
18	Economic development in Europe	ECE	May 1999
19	Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean	ECLAC	May 1998
20	Economic and social development in Western Asia	ESCWA	May 1999

64. **The Advisory Committee reiterates the observations and requests it made in paragraphs 87 and 88 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999[1] in which it called for the results and decisions taken in connection with intergovernmental reviews by relevant specialized bodies to be made available to it when it examines the proposed programme budget. In this connection, the Committee stresses that it is important for the relevant intergovernmental bodies to establish a mechanism by which their reviews can be finalized prior to the Secretary-General's preparation of the proposed programme budget. The Committee has noted improvements in some of the reviews of programmes of work, especially those related to the regional economic commissions, but believes that more could be done in this regard. Care should be taken to ensure that relevant intergovernmental bodies are provided with all necessary information in a timely fashion.**

65. **While encouraging greater involvement by the intergovernmental specialized bodies, the Advisory Committee also cautions that it must be borne in mind that the final**

responsibility for determining the budget rests with the General Assembly, which considers proposals of the Secretary-General after they have been reviewed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee. In this regard, the Committee recalls the comments it made in paragraph 29 of its report in document A/53/7.

"Within available resources"

66. The Advisory Committee notes with concern the growing practice of some intergovernmental bodies of attempting to determine the method of financing of mandates to be approved in the context of substantive resolutions, in contravention of the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987. The Committee recalls section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, whereby the General Assembly, *inter alia*:

> "1. *Reaffirms* that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters;
>
> "2. *Reaffirms also* the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;
>
> "3. *Expresses its concern* at the tendency of its substantive Committee and other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters".

67. In a related matter, the Advisory Committee notes the use of the phrase "within existing resources" in a number of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed of the difficulties that such limitations have on the implementation of mandated activities. The Committee has written extensively on this.[4] The Committee emphasizes the responsibility of the Secretariat to inform the General Assembly thoroughly and accurately about whether there are enough resources to implement a new activity; in order for this to be meaningful, programme managers must be fully involved.

Implementation of reforms

68. The Advisory Committee notes that this budget submission is the first one presented after the implementation of the reform measures as approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 52/12 A and B of 12 November and 19 December 1997, respectively. The Committee considers that in the proposed programme budget, information should have been given on the implementation of such measures, as well as on their impact on the budget estimates.

Publications

69. The publication programme of the United Nations has been a regular feature of commentary in reports of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for 1998–1999,[1] the Committee observed that not much progress had been made over the years in addressing the points raised by the Committee. The Committee called on the Secretary-General to respond specifically to its concerns. Since that time, the Joint Inspection Unit has issued a report on United Nations publications (A/51/946), and the Secretary-General provided comments in document A/52/685. The Committee submitted its own report (A/53/669) on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and the comments of the Secretary-General in November 1998. The latest submission by the Secretary-General on this subject is contained in paragraphs 39 to 45 of

the annex to the introduction of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Part one) (annex)).

70. The Advisory Committee is not satisfied with the information provided on the role of the Publications Board. In paragraph 9 of its report (A/53/669), the Advisory Committee had requested the Secretary-General

> "to indicate, in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, what steps have been taken to strengthen the Publications Board by reinforcing its mandates, working methods and practices in order to ensure that it provides effective overall control, oversight and coordination, in addition to policy guidance, on publishing activities, as recommended by JIU".

71. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, from the reply in document A/54/6 (Part one) (annex), the role of the Publications Board still appears to be too passive, and not much progress is reported on making the Board more effective. The Committee points out that it is not a question of requesting the Board to oversee the contents of publications; rather, it is for the Board to establish means by which it can ascertain the extent to which departments supervise more effectively the contents of their publications and how they are meeting the needs of the end-users.

72. Another issue of concern relates to the delay in publication of some official documents. In this connection, the Committee recalls paragraphs 10 and 11 of General Assembly resolution 52/214 B of 22 December 1997, in which the General Assembly expressed deep concern about difficulties experienced owing to the suspension of some publications in all official languages and the delay in translation of official documents, and requested the Secretary-General to provide all necessary resources to reverse this situation.

73. The Advisory Committee was informed that the issuance of publications in all official languages, suspended in the middle of 1995 owing to financial constraints, has been resumed. The decision on what to publish and in which languages is a matter for the author departments and the Publications Board. The Committee was further informed that, in principle, reference works, such as the *Disarmament Yearbook* or the *World Economic and Social Survey*, are published in all six official languages, while other publications, in particular those of a current, sectoral or technical nature, are produced in the languages of the target audience, as determined by the author department. It was indicated to the Committee that the backlog of publications, which occurred during the suspension, has now been cleared. The situation with regard to the *UN Chronicle*, a quarterly formerly produced in the six official languages, which was reduced to English and French, has been remedied by issuing a large single issue for 1998 in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish, covering the whole year. The Committee points out that it has noted instances, for example with regard to the International Court of Justice, where the backlog has not yet been cleared, and it urges that this be done expeditiously. The Committee requests that information with regard to publications in the narratives of the next proposed programme budget consistently indicate, by letter code, the languages of issuance.

74. With regard to delays in the issuance of official documents, it is to be noted that the delays were due to late submission of documents for processing to Conference Services, rather than the processing itself. The Advisory Committee was informed that this has been addressed by establishing focal points in all submitting departments to ensure liaison and coordination with Conference Services. The placement of the secretariats of the Economic and Social Council and four main committees of the General Assembly in the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services has also facilitated coordination with the secretaries of these parliamentary bodies and Conference Services.

75. The Advisory Committee was informed that while the six-week rule has not been fully complied with, steps were taken to ensure that the scheduling of documents for processing and issuance was made in coordination with committee secretaries so that documents submitted within a reasonable deadline were, to the extent possible, issued before the meetings at which they were to be considered. In the opinion of the Committee, this situation is unacceptable. Steps must be taken to ensure that all documentation prepared by the Secretariat is issued in a timely fashion. The General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies may also wish to consider their role in this matter. In this connection, the Secretary-General is encouraged to make proposals, through the Committee on Conferences, on possible amendments to the rules of procedures, including the six-week rule, taking into account recent technological innovations which may allow for the speedier transmission of documentation and the assistance that the United Nations could give in this regard (see para. 77 below).

76. The Advisory Committee was informed that the introduction of new technology in translation services had enabled a modest increase in productivity. The utilization of this technology takes time, however, as translators need to be trained on the new technological applications. Direct access by translators and revisers, including contractual translators, to electronic terminology and reference databases has been provided, and all in-house translators have been equipped with powerful computers. Following research and testing, a purchase order has now been placed to acquire computer-assisted-translation software, which should improve things further. It is estimated that 15 per cent of translation output would be suitable for computer-assisted-translation. Gains in productivity will, therefore, be modest at the beginning, but better results will come later. The Secretary-General should come forward with workload indicators as to how the above actions will result in gains in productivity and reflect this information in the next proposed programme budget (see also sect. 2 and sect. 27D of chap. II below).

77. The Advisory Committee considered the limitations on the use of electronic media for United Nations publications and recommends that the Secretariat address this issue in a central and coordinated fashion, with a view to improving electronic access in developing countries. The Secretary-General should indicate implementation of this recommendation in the context of the next proposed programme budget. The Committee has commented further on this in chapter II below, in particular with regard to UNCTAD and the regional economic commissions. The Committee also recalls the provisions of paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 C of 18 December 1998.

Printing

78. The Advisory Committee has made a number of enquiries concerning printing. The Committee is concerned that the Organization determine a rational basis for determining the mix of external and "in-house" printing. The Committee repeats its request that comparative data for all United Nations headquarters, encompassing all facilities available to the United Nations, should be provided early at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly on the relative costs of in-house printing and of outsourcing. On that basis, guidelines should be drawn up. In so doing, account should be taken of the feasibility of upgrading in-house capacity with new technology to allow for the expediency and flexibility afforded by producing documentation in-house. The Committee recognizes, however, that some publications require special production technology which it would not be cost effective for the United Nations to acquire; in this regard, authorization for such production should be on the basis of clear technical and cost criteria and demonstrated need.

79. In a related matter, in chapter II, part VIII, below, the Committee has commented upon the need for inter-agency cooperation in printing and on efforts to enhance common services in this regard, in particular in Geneva.

Information technology

80. In paragraph 38 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget, it is stated that "in association with developing a new organizational culture in a global secretariat, over recent years, substantial investment has been placed in harnessing the benefits of new information technologies for furthering the objectives of the Organization". In paragraph 34, it is indicated that "the dual approach of continued investment in technology and staff training may be expected to have a deeper and more pervasive impact on the effectiveness of the Organization than the modest additional resource increments that are being focused on high-priority programme areas".

81. The Advisory Committee requested data on the resources invested and/or requested for information technology under each section of the budget for 1998–1999, as compared with 2000–2001, and received the tables below.

82. Despite the statement quoted above about the impact of the "modest" additional resources requested for information technology, the Committee is concerned about the gap between the stated intent to create an electronic United Nations (see, for example, para. 27D.5 of the proposed programme budget) and the relatively low level of financial and human resources allocated to achieve that goal.

83. In paragraphs VIII.95 and VIII.96 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] the Advisory Committee recalled that it had recommended[5] a long-term coordinated strategy to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness through technological innovation, not only in the United Nations but throughout the United Nations system. The Committee had recommended, *inter alia*, that a strategy and time-frame for the coordination of various initiatives under way be submitted in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. In paragraph VIII.96,[1] the Committee recommended the appointment of an information technology task force. The reply of the Secretariat, as contained in the narrative at the end of section 27D of the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001, is not satisfactory and indicates that virtually nothing has been done since the Committee first made its recommendations several years ago.

84. Upon enquiry from the Advisory Committee, the Secretariat further clarified its position. The Secretariat acknowledged that there was a need for a comprehensive information strategy, which unfortunately has as yet not been developed and implemented. According to the Secretariat, however, an information technology strategy cannot be created and implemented in a vacuum and requires the involvement of not only technicians, but also policy makers. There are a number of separate but interdependent aspects that need to be considered: (a) infrastructure; (b) software applications; (c) telecommunications; and (d) human resources. The Secretariat indicated that the development of any information technology strategy or policy for the Organization needed to be based on knowledge of the situation at all duty stations and knowledge of the information technology plans of each user area. In addition, the policy must be realistically based on capabilities and the availability of resources. The Committee notes these concerns, but trusts that maximum effort will be made to achieve progress (see para. 92 below).

Proposed programme budget 2000–2001

Resources for information technology

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Section	1998–1999 appropriation								2000–2001 estimates							
	Hardware	*Software*[a]	*Supplies*	*Development*[b]	*Maintenance*	*Human resources*[c]	*ISCC and IMIS*	*Total*	*Hardware*	*Software*[a]	*Supplies*	*Development*[b]	*Maintenance*	*Human resources*[c]	*ISCC and IMIS*	*Total*
1	132.8		3.3		290.7			**426.8**	269.5		3.3		215.2			**488.0**
2	1 160.4	324.7	349.7	2 199.4	2 241.5	708.0		**6 983.7**	2 823.7	1 232.4	459.6	297.6	2 707.2	708.0		**8 228.5**
3	1 733.3	283.4		52.5	384.7	473.2		**2 927.1**	347.1	138.9		151.7	384.7	489.5		**1 511.9**
4	72.6	11.5			62.1			**146.2**	74.9	11.5			62.1			**148.5**
5	2 018.8				1 278.3			**3 297.1**	975.0				1 269.5			**2 244.5**
6	19.7				9.6			**29.3**	33.0				51.2			**84.2**
7	246.2	76.0				87.8		**410.0**	275.5	89.3				123.1		**487.9**
8	346.3	258.7			245.0	191.5		**1 041.5**	285.2	287.9			337.6	191.5		**1 102.2**
9	864.4		52.1	88.7	1 704.8	1 717.6		**4 427.6**	861.9		52.1	88.7	1 698.2	1 717.6		**4 418.5**
11A	557.2				2 029.2			**2 586.4**	811.9	145.3			2 211.1			**3 168.3**
12	8.4	1.5			21.4			**31.3**	8.4	1.5			29.8			**39.7**
13	144.6							**144.6**	163.9							**163.9**
14	70.6				16.4			**87.0**	68.7				47.1			**115.8**
15	110.1				115.4			**225.5**	356.3			145.9	271.6			**773.8**
16	1 853.5	111.3			9.9	211.1		**2 185.8**	1 449.7	252.6			15.8	339.4		**2 057.5**
17	603.2			112.7	42.3	160.6		**918.8**	784.2			116.2	92.8	345.5		**1 338.7**
18	485.4	158.9	58.4		1 266.8			**1 969.5**	485.4	143.2	58.4		880.4			**1 567.4**
19	970.6	622.8			192.1			**1 785.5**	975.9	622.8			145.3	187.3		**1 931.3**
20	605.7			198.7	56.8	238.5		**1 099.7**	387.1			287.6	186.8	511.0		**1 372.5**
22	221.5	18.9			42.1			**282.5**	264.7	88.7			36.5			**389.9**
25	224.5	40.3			1 034.9	39.5		**1 339.2**	224.5	274.3			725.7	39.5		**1 264.0**
26	1 191.4	523.3			881.3	305.2		**2 901.2**	1 215.5	701.3			889.0	305.2		**3 111.0**
27	3 732.8	1 766.6	723.5	2 680.1	11 273.9	22 549.8	6 500.0	**49 226.7**	3 526.6	2 623.4	856.8	4 611.3	10 598.9	26 685.0	3 000.0	**51 902.0**
28	251.9	33.1		12.6	155.2			**452.8**	222.0	33.1		26.8	156.6			**438.5**
29							357.5	**357.5**							458.3	**458.3**
31								**0.0**	3 488.2	500.0						**3 988.2**
Total	**17 625.9**	**4 231.0**	**1 187.0**	**5 344.7**	**23 354.4**	**26 682.8**	**6 857.5**	**85 283.3**	**20 378.8**	**7 146.2**	**1 430.2**	**5 725.8**	**23 013.1**	**31 642.6**	**3 458.3**	**92 795.0**

Notes: It should be noted that object of expenditure definitions utilized predate, in large part, the extensive development of information technology in the United Nations Secretariat. Consequently, according to the Secretariat, some questions of definition have had to be handled pragmatically. In the case of human resources, posts and general temporary assistance exclusively devoted to information technology have been reflected to the extent that these can be directly identified. However, as a high proportion of staff spend some of their time in matters related to information technology, the total human resources component is probably much in excess of the figures quoted.

[a] Software includes acquisition/replacement of software packages, licences and subscription to on-line services.

[b] Development includes contractual services for system design and development, and upgrading and re-engineering of various systems.

[c] Human rights includes personnel and other staff costs, including training.

Proposed programme budget 2000–2001

Resources for information technology by section

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Section		*1998–1999 appropriation*	*Resource growth*		*2000–2001 estimates*
			Amount	*Percentage*	
1.	Overall policy-making, direction and coordination	426.8	61.2	14.3	488.0
2.	General Assembly affairs and conference services	6 983.7	1 244.8	17.8	8 228.5
3.	Political affairs	2 927.1	(1 415.2)	(48.3)	1 511.9
4.	Disarmament	146.2	2.3	1.6	148.5
5.	Peacekeeping operations	3 297.1	(1 052.6)	(31.9)	2 244.5
6.	Outer space	29.3	54.9	187.4	84.2
7.	International Court of Justice	410.0	77.9	19.0	487.9
8.	Legal affairs	1 041.5	60.7	5.8	1 102.2
9.	Economic and social affairs	4 427.6	(9.1)	(0.2)	4 418.5
11A.	Trade and development	2 586.4	581.9	22.5	3 168.3
12.	Environment	31.3	8.4	26.8	39.7
13.	Human settlements	144.6	19.3	13.3	163.9
14.	Crime prevention and criminal justice	87.0	28.8	33.1	115.8
15.	International drug control	225.5	548.3	243.1	773.8
16.	Economic and social development in Africa	2 185.8	(128.3)	(5.9)	2 057.5
17.	Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	918.8	419.9	45.7	1 338.7
18.	Economic development in Europe	1 969.5	(402.1)	(20.4)	1 567.4
19.	Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean	1 785.5	145.8	8.2	1 931.3
20.	Economic and social development in Western Asia	1 099.7	272.8	24.8	1 372.5
22.	Human rights	282.5	107.4	38.0	389.9
25.	Humanitarian assistance	1 339.2	(75.2)	(5.6)	1 264.0
26.	Public information	2 901.2	209.8	7.2	3 111.0
27.	Management and central support services	49 226.7	2 675.3	5.4	51 902.0
28.	Internal oversight	452.8	(14.3)	(3.2)	438.5
29.	Jointly financed administrative activities	357.5	100.8	28.2	458.3
31.	Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance	0.0	3 988.2		3 988.2
	Total	**85 283.3**	**7 511.7**	**8.8**	**92 795.0**

85. The Advisory Committee was informed that efforts were proceeding to develop an information technology policy outline, which clearly defines the role of the Information Technology Services Division within the Secretariat, creates an effective Information Technology Advisory Board at the policy level (supported by technical working groups) and establishes greater coordination of information technology initiatives within the Organization (including the roles of offices away from Headquarters). According to the Secretariat, the recent appointment of a new Director of the Division will be instrumental in this process. The Secretariat cautioned, however, that after years of the absence of "real" policies in this area, time and effort will be required to fully develop an effective Organization-wide strategy.

86. The Advisory Committee recalls the comments it made on information technology in paragraphs VIII.80–VIII.104 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999.[1] In particular, the Committee noted the establishment of an Information Technology Coordinating Committee. In paragraph VIII.93, the Committee trusted that the Information Technology Coordinating Committee would be able

> "to introduce orderly development of new information systems, introduce guidelines for standards on hardware and software and prevent what appears to be a piecemeal approach resulting in the development of incompatible computer systems and the acquisition of different software, even for the same application. For example, different software is now being used at Headquarters and at duty stations away from Headquarters. The concurrent use of such software as Wordperfect, Microsoft Word, Power Point and Excel makes it difficult for users to share information without using a series of conversion applications. The applications used in Geneva, for example, are different from New York".

87. The Advisory Committee notes with concern the Secretariat's response contained near the end of section 27D of the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 that "due to many changes in the senior management of ITSD, the activities of ITCC were put on hold". The Committee expects that urgent action will be taken to enable the effective functioning of the Information Technology Coordinating Committee.

88. The Advisory Committee also notes the reply of the Secretariat to the concern of the Committee, expressed in paragraph VIII.94 of its report,[1] about the lack of comprehensive knowledge of the state of technology at the United Nations. The Committee trusts that the development of a comprehensive inventory of technological capacity will help to address the Committee's recommendation that

> "information on the extent of use of new technology in United Nations operations, including information on the related investment in infrastructure, hardware and software, be submitted to the Committee in the context of future proposed programme and peacekeeping budgets".

89. In this connection, the Advisory Committee points out that such information as is available on the inventory of equipment is presented under various objects of expenditure in an inconsistent manner in the various sections of the proposed programme budget. Similarly, there is lack of clarity of replacement policies for automation equipment. The Committee requests the Secretariat to present an analysis and proposed guidelines for a replacement policy on automation equipment in the next proposed programme budget.

90. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that each section of the proposed programme budget should contain a summary of all proposals on information technology as they relate to that section. Such proposals should indicate developments from the previous biennium and changes anticipated in the coming biennium. The Committee recommends

that in the future a breakdown of the estimated resources be made to differentiate between funds for maintenance, operational support and infrastructure upgrading, on the one hand, and funds for investment in new technology, including research and development, on the other. The breakdown should be made under each section of the budget as appropriate. Such information, accompanied by clearly defined projects and related benefits under each section of the budget, as stated above, should enable the Committee and the General Assembly to assess more clearly the level of resources invested in this area and the benefits to be gained from such investment. The need for upgrading information technology capacity should not, however, become an excuse for excessive expenditure on hardware and hardware maintenance.

91. On the basis of information from representatives of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee has concluded that there currently is no coordinated policy within the Secretariat regarding the development, management and hosting of Web sites. It appears to the Committee that each department, office or station has been more or less on its own in this important emerging feature of United Nations operations, leading to wide divergencies in quality of products. The Committee is of the view that there is an urgent need for immediate correction of the present weakness. The Committee recommends that the Department of Public Information, together with the Information Technology Services Division, take the leading role in providing coordination and advice (see part VII below). All United Nations client departments should be encouraged to establish Web sites. However, the design, updating of content, maintenance and other management aspects should conform to certain common standards and policies, which should be set centrally. Attention should also be paid to paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 C regarding the equal treatment of languages on the Web sites. In this connection, the Committee notes paragraphs 23 and 24 of the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in the field of information.[6] The Committee also notes the information in paragraphs 25 to 32 of the same report which provide an update on new Web site features.

92. The Advisory Committee points out that the use of technology in the United Nations is of fundamental importance in order to ensure that the Organization will be adequately equipped to meet future challenges. It is critical that the Secretariat proceed to address the concerns expressed so as to move from the present reality to the Secretary-General's stated objective of an electronic United Nations. The Committee requests that the long-sought information strategy be formulated as a matter of urgency and be presented to the General Assembly before the end of its fifty-fourth session. In this connection, the Committee wishes to point out that the use of new technology should not be confined simply to the purchase of hardware and software and the installation of appropriate infrastructure. It must involve a concerted and sustained effort by the Secretariat to inculcate the culture of information technology throughout the Secretariat. To this end, a comprehensive training programme and enhancing the awareness of the importance of information technology in all United Nations operations and processes should be embraced by senior management and become an essential part of the top priority objectives at all levels of the Organization. It is also important to achieve enhanced cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and, for example, its programmes in New York, such as UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, with a view to sharing best practice to the maximum extent possible.

Year 2000 compliance

93. In paragraph 16 of its report on the financial report and audited statements and reports of the Board of Auditors (A/53/513), the Advisory Committee requested the United Nations Administration and all the administrations of the funds and programmes mentioned in

paragraph 1 of the above-mentioned report to report to it by May 1999 on the progress made with respect to the year 2000 compliance issue. The Committee further requested the United Nations Secretariat to coordinate the preparation of the report.

94. The Advisory Committee has received information pursuant to its request. This information will be issued as a document of the General Assembly, and the Assembly may wish to take note of it.

Travel

95. The total amount requested for travel for 2000–2001 is $49.3 million, as shown in the table below.

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001
Travel resources proposed by section
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Section		*1998–1999 appropriation*	*Resource growth*		*Recosting*	*2000–2001 estimates*
			Amount	*Percentage*		
1.	Overall policy-making direction and coordination	7 095.5	790.6	11.1	881.8	8 767.9
2.	General Assembly affairs and conference services	596.1	15.1	2.5	29.9	641.1
3.	Political affairs	4 400.6	(2 221.8)	(50.5)	105.9	2 284.7
4.	Disarmament	443.5	(212.6)	(47.9)	11.3	242.2
5.	Peacekeeping operations	4 463.0	51.1	1.1	219.2	4 733.3
6.	Outer space	104.7	0.0	0.0	5.1	109.8
7.	International Court of Justice	110.3	(25.2)	(22.8)	4.2	89.3
8.	Legal affairs	2 572.9	26.3	1.0	126.4	2 725.6
9.	Economic and social affairs	4 553.3	295.4	6.5	235.7	5 084.4
10.	Africa recovery	240.6	0.0	0.0	11.7	252.3
11A.	Trade and Development	1 829.8	(79.4)	(4.3)	85.0	1 835.4
12.	Environment	292.9	(49.6)	(16.9)	11.8	255.1
13.	Human settlements	114.0	90.0	78.9	10.1	214.1
14.	Crime prevention and criminal justice	239.9	133.1	55.5	18.2	391.2
15.	International drug control	1 182.2	360.7	30.5	75.0	1 617.9
16.	Economic and social development in Africa	2 266.0	(292.4)	(12.9)	96.0	2 069.6
17.	Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	1 330.1	4.9	0.4	64.8	1 399.8
18.	Economic development in Europe	622.1	0.0	0.0	30.5	652.6
19.	Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean	1 667.3	0.0	0.0	81.3	1 748.6
20.	Economic and social development in Western Asia	468.8	36.0	7.7	24.5	529.3
22.	Human rights	7 575.9	26.7	0.4	369.3	7 971.9
25.	Humanitarian assistance	1 081.4	55.1	5.1	55.0	1 191.5
26.	Public information	1 243.9	677.9	54.5	93.1	2 014.9
27.	Management and central support services	1 089.4	311.2	28.6	68.1	1 468.7
28.	Internal oversight	813.6	112.3	13.8	44.9	970.8
	Total	**46 397.8**	**105.4**	**0.2**	**2 758.8**	**49 262.0**

96. As can be seen from the table above, resource growth of $105,400 appears modest. However, it should be noted that the $2.2 million decrease under section 3 relates to special missions. The Advisory Committee recognizes the importance of travel to the activities of the United Nations. At the same time, it is also an area where judicious management can produce savings. Indeed, much travel is discretionary and, as the Committee has pointed out in the past, savings can be achieved if travel is planned in order to combine missions where feasible. Moreover, rapid advances in technology in recent years have obviated the need for travel in a number of instances. In this regard, the Committee encourages expansion of such facilities as teleconferencing and remote interpretation and translation, together with other forms of electronic communication and data transmission. The Secretary-General should also examine whether the most favourable rates are being availed for air travel, and, if necessary, introduce a measure of competition to achieve that objective. Taking into account the above-mentioned factors, the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General review every possible measure which would lead to further economies of travel (see also chap. II, sect. 3 below).

97. In order to facilitate the monitoring, by the General Assembly, of travel expenditures, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretariat revert to the practice of presenting estimates for travel in the tables, showing a summary of requirements by object of expenditure in two categories — travel of representatives and official travel of staff.

Personnel practices and policies

98. Over the years, the Advisory Committee has maintained a continuing interest in personnel policies and practices, as these have a major impact on the good management of the Organization and the efficient use of its resources. The Committee has frequently commented upon complex personnel regulations, cumbersome and time-consuming recruitment procedures, and the effective use of training resources.

99. The Advisory Committee has noted that a number of problems pointed to in the past persist. For example, persistent high vacancy rates may be due to a number of factors, including inefficiency in the recruitment, appointment and placement process of the United Nations and its offices away from Headquarters. In addition, the Committee points out the adverse effect of existing complex rules and procedures under which recruitment and placement operate. In this connection, the Committee recalls that in paragraph 141 of its report,[2] the Board of Auditors reported on this matter. The Board indicated that a review by the United Nations Office at Geneva of the time it took to recruit in 1995 revealed that "it took between 68 and 87 weeks to fill a Professional post through an internal placement or promotion and between 86 and 99 weeks for an external vacancy. The Board indicates in paragraph 142 of its report that, in several cases, recruitment took more than a year.

100. Recent action by the General Assembly, in particular Assembly resolution 53/221, directly affects a number of areas of personnel management of concern to the Advisory Committee. The Committee requested the Secretariat to indicate the impact of recent General Assembly resolutions on the management of the staff.

101. According to information received from the Secretariat, aspects of General Assembly resolution 53/221 will assist the Secretary-General to develop policies or procedures which might have not been as easy to achieve without the insistence of the Assembly, such as the development of accountability mechanisms.

102. However, the Secretariat has also informed the Advisory Committee of difficulties it is experiencing with regard to career development for existing P-2 staff members, as well as difficulties in recruitment and the vacancy management system. In addition, the

Secretariat has informed the Committee of its concern with regard to recent actions by the General Assembly affecting the competitive examination for the promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories.

103. The Advisory Committee believes that this situation could be ameliorated if the General Assembly, in enacting the broad principles of personnel policy, could request the Secretary-General to develop specific implementation proposals for submission to the Assembly. In developing those proposals, the Secretariat would be able to consider carefully the implications on the work of the Organization of all of the relevant aspects of directives given by the Assembly, draw the attention of the Assembly to any implementation problems that might arise and make concrete proposals to deal with those problems.

104. With regard to the difficulties currently being experienced by the Secretariat and briefly described above, the Advisory Committee requests that the Secretary-General prepare an analysis of the situation for the consideration of the General Assembly early at its fifty-fourth session.

105. The Advisory Committee stresses that the Secretariat's role is to develop the necessary procedures and the administrative mechanisms to implement legislative mandates and directives. The Secretary-General needs the flexibility to make the administrative arrangements that he deems appropriate, within the context of the overall principles and policies legislated by the General Assembly and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Liaison offices

106. This matter is dealt with in paragraphs 9 to 38 of the annex to the introduction to the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Part one) (annex)). It is supposed to represent a response to the request made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 115 and 116 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for biennium 1998–1999.[1] In paragraph 116, the Advisory Committee stated the following:

> "The level of resources devoted to liaison offices is thus considerable, yet, as can be seen in chapter II, for some offices it is not quite clear what is actually being accomplished; others seem understaffed to carry out the stated objectives. It is also not clear what impact, if any, the recent advances in communication and computer technology have had on these offices. The Advisory Committee believes the time has come for a thorough review of liaison offices to determine what tasks still need to be carried out by them in view of the ability to communicate instantly around the world. Those activities which still need to be carried out should be adequately funded and opportunities to combine and consolidate the activities and functions of various liaison offices should be explored. The results of this review should be specifically referred to and reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001."

The response of the Secretariat does not address the concerns raised by the Committee. It is merely a descriptive compendium of the various liaison offices without any analysis, nor is there any evidence that a review has actually taken place. Indeed, the main change that appears to have taken place is, as stated in paragraph 15 of the annex to the introduction to the proposed programme budget, that "in the present budget proposals, resources proposed under the regular budget for liaison office operations reflect an overall increase from the resources available in the 1998–1999 revised appropriation, largely attributable to posts". The Committee was subsequently informed, upon request, that total regular budget resources for liaison offices for 2000–2001, as compared with 1998–1999, are as shown in the table below.

Liaison offices: number of regular budget posts and non-post resources

Liaison offices	Post resources (Number of posts) 1998–1999	Post resources (Number of posts) 2000–2001	Non-post resources (United States dollars) 1998–1999	2000–2001 Total before recosting[a]	2000–2001 Recosting	2000–2001 Estimates[b]
Regional Commissions New York Office	6	6	70 300	76 200	3 700	79 900
United Nations Office at Vienna/United Nations International Drug Control Programme	2	2	0	0	0	0
UNCTAD	3	3	8 300	8 300	400	8 700
UNEP	7	10	126 500	143 300	(3 000)	140 300
Habitat	3	4	50 500	72 200	3 400	75 600
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	7	8	91 300	96 800	5 100	101 900
UNRWA	3	3	23 600	23 600	1 200	24 800
Total	**31**	**36**	**370 500**	**420 400**	**10 800**	**431 200**

Note: The Advisory Committee requested, but did not receive, an indication of what extrabudgetary resources, if any, were available to liaison offices.

[a] At 1998–1999 rates.

[b] At 2000–2001 rates.

107. The Advisory Committee regrets the lack of a substantive response on this matter and reiterates its request for a review and analysis of the liaison office function.

Career development in language services (A/53/919)

108. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its report (A/53/507, para. 5), it called on the Secretary-General to prepare a special report analysing such problems as may exist related to career development in language services. In paragraph 16 of his report on career development in language services (A/53/919), the Secretary-General has set out four possible courses of action to address the question of career development in language services, with detailed explanations in paragraphs 17 to 27 of the same report. The objectives of career development are briefly described in paragraph 2 of the report. The Committee notes the statement of the Secretary-General that career development is a shared responsibility between staff and the Organization and that "career development should not be equated solely with the existence of promotion opportunities. Although the latter constitutes one element, such factors as potential for broadening of professional experience and access to training and development opportunities should be considered".

109. However, the Advisory Committee believes that the question as to whether and to what extent the career development situation of staff in the language services is worse than that of other occupational groups in the Secretariat has not been clearly answered in the report of the Secretary-General.

110. The subject of career prospects for staff in language services has already been studied in depth by the Secretariat, and action has been taken by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee points out that in his report contained in document A/C.5/35/75, the Secretary-General submitted proposals to the General Assembly to restructure posts in the

language services. The purpose of the restructuring was to provide more posts at senior grades in order to improve the career prospects of staff in language services. The proposals of the Secretary-General were considered by the Advisory Committee. In its report,[7] the Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the proposals of the Secretary-General. In its resolution 35/225 of 17 December 1980, the General Assembly approved the new grade structure for implementation, as proposed by the Secretary-General, in the period 1981 to 1983.

111. The Advisory Committee believes that the drafters of the Secretary-General's present report (A/53/919) may not have been aware of the existence of the previous reports and related action taken by the General Assembly, since no mention is made of them in the report. Accordingly, the Committee requests that a comprehensive review of the grading of language posts at all duty stations be conducted, as indicated in paragraph 28 of the report of the Secretary-General and that the results of the review be presented to the Committee for consideration prior to the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002–2003. This procedure would be similar to that followed in the previous review of the grade structure of language posts. The presentation to the Committee should include information on the implementation of the "non-budgetary measures" which can be taken to address problems, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General. Furthermore, since the grade structure in the language services has already been changed to improve career prospects, it is incumbent on the Secretary-General to justify fully why further changes should be made. In particular, it must be demonstrated that career prospects in the language services of the United Nations are less favourable than in other United Nations services.

Impact of economy measures on the delivery of mandated conference services (A/53/833)

112. The Advisory Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of economy measures on the delivery of mandated conference services (A/53/833). In its resolution 53/208 B of 18 December 1998, the General Assembly took note of paragraph 62 of the report of the Committee on Conferences,[8] which stated that no further budget reductions could be borne by conference services at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna or Nairobi. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that in its report, it had discussed the question of resource reductions for conference services at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna (see A/53/7, paras. 18, 19 and 50–55). It does not appear to the Committee that the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 has taken account of these observations.

Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States (A/53/826)

113. The Advisory Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States (A/53/826). The Committee took note of the information contained in the table of statistics for the periods from July 1996 to January 1999 in this regard, as well as measures for improvement, as indicated in paragraph 10 of the report.

Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/53/827)

114. The Advisory Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/53/827). It took particular note of the actions to be taken by the Secretariat, as indicated in paragraph 27

of the report, to offer the best possible conference facilities and services, including the possibility of establishing a permanent interpretation service at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and drawing the attention of United Nations bodies and regional and other major groupings to the provisions of paragraph 21 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 A of 18 December 1998.

Construction of additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa and Bangkok (A/53/347/Add.1)

115. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the construction of additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa and Bangkok (A/53/347/Add.1), the Advisory Committee welcomes the progress reported by the Secretary-General and his reiteration that no additional resources are being requested beyond amounts already authorized by the General Assembly for the construction of the conference centre at Addis Ababa. The Committee urges that the discussion under way with the host Government be concluded without further delay so as to permit the installation of satellite communication facilities at ECA, and the full and exclusive ownership by the Organization of the on-site equipment. The Committee notes that of all the United Nations commissions, only the ECA is yet to have satellite communication facilities. Thus, for example, no videoconference is possible with the Commission.

Comprehensive study of the question of honorariums payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations (A/53/643)

116. Paragraph 2 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/643) reflects the rates, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 35/218 of 17 December 1980, of the honorarium payable effective 1 January 1981, to members of the International Law Commission, the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the Human Rights Committee.

117. As indicated in paragraph 3 of the report, the General Assembly, in its resolution 36/240 A of 18 December 1981, subsequently decided that the same rates of honorariums should be payable to members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; by section VII of its resolution 44/201 A of 21 December 1989, the Assembly decided that the emoluments for members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child should be payable at the rates authorized in resolution 35/218.

118. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 22 to 29 of the report the information on the prevailing practice in respect of payment of honorariums by other Organizations within the United Nations system. The Committee points out that most agencies do not pay any honorariums. The Committee also notes the information in respect of the review by the Secretary-General of payment of honorariums, as indicated in paragraphs 31 to 54 of his report, as well as the opinions expressed by the Presidents of the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Administrative Tribunal in paragraphs 55 to 57 of the report.

119. The Advisory Committee notes the Secretary-General's statement in paragraph 63 of his report that since the General Assembly last revised the rates effective 1 January 1981, the Assembly may wish to consider increasing the rates of honorariums by 25 per cent. The financial implications of such an increase are reflected in paragraph 65 of the report. However, the Committee recommends that, should the Assembly decide to increase the rates, it should be done with effect from 1 January 2000.

120. In paragraph 65 of his report, the Secretary-General has also reflected the financial implications of payment of honorariums to the members of three bodies which are not

covered under the provision of General Assembly resolutions 35/218, 36/340 A and 44/201. These bodies are the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee against Torture.

121. However, as indicated in paragraph 61 of the report, the criteria and authority for the payment of honorariums to members of organs and subsidiary organs rests solely with the legislative authority of the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee agrees with this statement.

Proposed measures to improve the profitability of the commercial activities of the United Nations (A/53/794)

122. This report, issued in January 1999, indicated that a comprehensive review of public space at Headquarters and related issues concerning commercial activities was under way; results of the review were to be reported in the income sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. Relevant observations of the Committee can be found in chapter II below under income sections 2 and 3.

123. The Advisory Committee notes the information contained in paragraphs 5 to 8 of the report on developments related to the sale of publications in Geneva.

Impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures (A/53/947)

124. The Advisory Committee has also considered the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures (A/53/947). The report provides information on the implementation of the pilot project at ECLAC. Under the project, delegation of authority was given to ECLAC in several areas of human resources management and limited aspects of financial management; in the light of concerns expressed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 about possible changes in budgetary practices and procedures, the report indicates that the decision to delegate authority on financial matters was never implemented by ECLAC, except for the write-off of property for Survey Board cases (A/52/947, para. 2). The Committee was informed that, in addition to the pilot project at ECLAC, pilot projects have been conducted in remote translation and interpretation. The results are being reviewed. The Committee was informed that the pilot projects for Vienna and Headquarters have been suspended, as programme managers concluded that they were unlikely to yield useful results. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General continue to inform Member States, in conjunction with proposed programme budgets, about pilot projects that he has undertaken and the results achieved. In this connection, he should take fully into account the views expressed by the Committee in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 and subsequent decisions of the General Assembly and other relevant intergovernmental bodies.

Consequences that the increase in the volume of cases before the International Court of Justice has on the operation of the Court (A/53/326 and Corr.1)

125. The Advisory Committee takes note of this report and has taken it into account in formulating its recommendations with regard to section 7 of part III in chapter II below.

Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses

126. The Advisory Committee believes that the time has come to review the levels specified in the resolution of the General Assembly on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. Accordingly, the Committee requests the Secretary-General to submit an analysis to the General Assembly at the main part of its fifty-fourth session, together with proposals, if necessary, for adjustment of the various levels specified therein.

Cooperation with other United Nations bodies

127. The Advisory Committee has submitted reports to the following United Nations bodies:

(a) The Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the overview of UNHCR activities financed from voluntary funds, 1996–1998 (A/AC.96/884/Add.3);

(b) The Executive Board of the World Food Programme on the biennial budget of WFP for 1998–1999, on the proposed use of interest income and on the appointment of the External Auditor for the term July 1998 to June 2002 (WFP/EB.3/97/4-A/Add.2, WFP/EB.3/97/4-C/Add.2, WFP/EB.3/97/4-D/Add.2);

(c) The Advisory Commission of UNRWA on the proposed 1998–1999 budget;

(d) The Governing Council of UNEP on the revised budgets for 1996–1997 and 1998–1999 (UNEP/GCSS.V/INF/3);

(e) The Council of the United Nations University on the proposed academic programme and budget of the United Nations University for the biennium 1998–1999 (UNU/C/44/L.4/Add.1);

(f) The Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the revised programme budget and performance report of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for the biennium 1996–1997 and the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 (E/CN.7/1997/16);

(g) The Executive Board of UNICEF on the biennial support budget for 1998–1999 (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.2);

(h) The Board of Trustees of UNITAR on the Institute's programme budget for 1998;

(i) The Executive Board of UNICEF regarding recovery policy (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.12);

(j) The Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA on the revision of the financial regulations of UNDP and UNFPA and on the review of multi-bilateral trust-fund arrangements of UNFPA (DP/1998/37-DP/FPA/1998/14);

(k) The Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA on the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1997–1998 for the United Nations Office for Project Services (DP/1998/36);

(l) The Executive Board of the World Food Programme on the report on budgetary performance for 1996–1997 and the audited biennial accounts for 1996–1997 and financial report and statements (WFP/EB.3/98/4-A/2, WFP/EB.3/98/4-C/2);

(m) The Executive Committee of the Programme of UNHCR on the overview of UNHCR activities for 1997–1999 (A/AC.96/900/Add.3);

(n) The Board of Trustees of UNIDIR on the Institute's draft work programme and proposed budget for 1999;

(o) The Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF on the harmonization of budgets for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF (DP/1999/7-DP/FPA/1999/3-E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.4);

(p) The Executive Board of WFP on direct support cost advance facility and the proposed revisions of the general regulations, general rules and financial regulations of WFP (WFP/EB.1/99/4-B/1, WFP/EB.1/99/4-C/1/1);

(q) The Governing Council of UNEP on the Programme's revised requirements for 1998–1999 and the proposed requirements for 2000–2001 (UNEP/GC.20/21);

(r) The Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the prototype of the UNHCR annual programme budget (A/AC.96/900/Add.4);

(s) The Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the proposed revised biennial support budget of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for 1998–1999 and proposed outline for 2000–2001 (E/CN.7/1999/14);

(t) The Board of Trustees of UNITAR on the Institute's programme budget for 1999;

(u) The Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA on UNDP financial risk management, including a review of its operational reserve (DP/1999/26);

(v) The Commission on Human Settlements on the proposed budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium 2000–2001 (HS/C/17/9/Add.1);

(w) The Executive Board of WFP on the Programme's strategic and financial plan for 2000–2003, the budgetary performance for 1998 and the funding of the Financial Management Improvement Programme (WFP/EB.A/99/5-A/3, WFP/EB.A/99/5-B/3, WFP/EB.A/99/5-C/3).

Overall position of the Advisory Committee on the initial estimates for the biennium 2000–2001

128. The detailed review and consideration by the Advisory Committee of the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 has led it to conclude that it had no basis to change the overall level of resources proposed by the Secretary-General. A number of factors have led to this conclusion.

129. On the one hand, for example, there currently exists a nearly 9 per cent vacancy factor for posts at the Professional category and above. In addition, in the paragraphs above and in chapter II below, the Advisory Committee has made a number of recommendations which involve a reduction in the estimates under certain sections of the proposed programme budget.

130. On the other hand, the Advisory Committee's review, as contained in chapter II below, indicated several areas where additional resources could be required under certain sections of the proposed programme budget. The Committee points out that the last two bienniums have been ones of budgetary stringency and restraint, with the cost of additional activities, such as special missions, having to be absorbed and with reductions in posts. Fortuitous gains in currency and low inflation have helped offset the effects of these developments, but this might not always be the case. Moreover, the Committee has been assured by the representatives of the Secretary-General that steps are being taken to significantly reduce vacancies.

131. The Advisory Committee recalls the difficulties described in paragraphs 4–9 and 10–12 of its first report on the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999.[1] In paragraph 27 of that report, it is indicated that "the statements of the Advisory Committee that reductions of the magnitude called for could not be achieved without service reductions and delays and postponement of programmes and that a deterioration in quality of services and timeliness of delivery would also be involved appear to have been borne out by events". The Committee cautions that continued deviations from the full application of General Assembly resolution 41/213 in all its aspects will call into serious question the validity of the budgetary process embodied therein.

132. As was the case with the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999, the specific observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee under the individual sections of the budget, which appear in Chapter II below, are directed at what is needed to promote the full and efficient implementation of the various legislative mandates and directives.

Chapter II

Detailed recommendations on the proposed programme budget

Estimates of expenditure

Part I
Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

I.1. Part I of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 covers section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination, and section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services. The total estimate of $489,903,200 for 1999–2000 represents the regular budget requirements for the biennium for both sections 1 and 2 of the proposed programme budget.

Section 1
Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

I.2. Section 1 of the proposed programme budget covers overall policy-making, direction and coordination. The estimate of $45,890,400 before recosting represents the regular budget requirements for the biennium 2000–2001. As can be seen from table 1.1 of the proposed programme budget, resources for part A, Policy-making organs, are estimated at $18,322,100, denoting an increase of 15.3 per cent over the previous biennium, while resources for part B, Executive direction and management, are estimated at $27,568,300, denoting an increase of 5.7 per cent for an overall increase 9.3 percent for both parts A and B.

I.3. With regard to extrabudgetary resources, the Advisory Committee notes from table 1.1 (2) of the proposed programme budget that the total estimate is $10,407,300. Of this, an amount of $6,906,300 relates mainly to requirements for external audit; a breakdown is given in table 1.11 (2).

I.4. Total post requirements for the section are indicated in table 1.3 of the proposed programme budget. As shown in the table, the total number proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 is 139, an increase of 4 posts over the previous biennium.

I.5. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996–1997[9] the Advisory Committee had raised the question of resources made available to the Office of the President of the General Assembly. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for 1998–1999[1] the Committee had also expressed its view that there was a need to ensure that the Office of the President of the General Assembly was provided with adequate resources. The Committee believed that need had become more pronounced owing to the extended meeting schedule of the General Assembly throughout the year.

I.6. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1.5 of the proposed programme budget that of the provision of $2,133,500 for the General Assembly, an amount of $609,000 relates to the requirements of the President of the General Assembly and $1,524,500 relates to the travel of up to five representatives of Member States that are least developed countries. The Committee requests that, in order to provide clarity and transparency, the estimates for support to the President of the General Assembly be presented separately from the estimates for the travel of representatives of least developed countries to the sessions of the General Assembly.

I.7. As indicated in the proposed programme budget, support to the President of the General Assembly before recosting consists of $289,000 for general temporary assistance (para. 1.7), $200,000 for estimated travel requirements (para. 1.8), $20,000 for miscellaneous services (para. 1.11) and $100,000 for hospitality (para. 1.12). The Advisory Committee requested a clarification of the resources provided for the support of the President of the General Assembly. From the additional information provided orally and in writing, the basis of the estimate of $609,000 for the support of the President of the General Assembly was not clear to the Committee. The Committee points out that the estimate is actually for the support of the Presidents of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions. That being the case, the Committee stresses the importance of full implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on the subject, in particular resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, section III, section 1B, paragraph 11, and 53/214, section IV, paragraphs 13 and 14. In this connection, the Committee recommends that the adequacy of the present estimate be carefully monitored with a view to adjusting it in the light of experience.

I.8. Paragraph 1.9 of the proposed programme budget details the various General Assembly resolutions pursuant to which provision has been made for travel of up to five representatives of Member States that are least developed countries to sessions of the General Assembly. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1.5 of the proposed programme budget, that a discount factor of approximately 25 per cent has been applied to the total estimates of travel of representatives on the basis of their attendance at past regular and special sessions of the Assembly.

I.9. On enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the representatives of Member States that are least developed countries are informed of their entitlement to travel to the sessions of the General Assembly through the booklet entitled "Information for Delegations, United Nations Headquarters". These entitlements are also contained in the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/107/Rev.6 of 25 March 1991. The Committee requests that the Secretariat ensure that least developed countries are duly informed of this entitlement before the start of the General Assembly each year.

I.10. The Advisory Committee notes from table 1.8 of the proposed programme budget that resources estimated for the Advisory Committee, including its secretariat, amount to $4,917,500 before recosting, reflecting an increase of 3.7 per cent over the previous biennium. As indicated in paragraph 1.17 of the proposed programme budget, the estimates for travel of the Committee are based on the assumption that 13 members are not stationed in New York and are thus entitled to travel and subsistence; the assumptions made in the programme budget for 1998–1999 provided for travel and subsistence of 12 members.

I.11. With regard to the estimates of $80,400 (before recosting) related to the reimbursement for air fares for the spouses of 13 members of the Advisory Committee, the Committee notes that no discount factor has been applied to the estimates and that past experience has not been considered. The Committee requests that a discount factor be applied for the next proposed programme budget on the basis of past experience.

I.12. As indicated in table 1.11 of the proposed programme budget, resources requested for the Board of Auditors, including its Secretariat, amount to $4,490,800 (before recosting); in addition, a total of $6,906,300 in extrabudgetary resources is projected to be available for 2000–2001. With regard to the scope of the audits, the Advisory Committee draws attention to regulation 12.6 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, which states that the Board of Auditors shall be completely independent and solely responsible for the conduct of the audit. The Committee also draws attention to regulation 12.8, which states that the Secretary-General shall provide the Board of Auditors with the facilities it may require in the performance of the audit.

I.13. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its report on the financial reports and audited financial statements and reports of the Board of Auditors (A/53/513), it had sought information on the workload of the Board of Auditors and its effect on resources. The Committee had been informed that prior to the biennium 1994–1995 the Board had submitted some 16 reports during each biennium to the General Assembly. However, since then the workload of the Board had increased as a result of (a) additional organizations and activities, including peacekeeping operations, for which 18 additional reports needed to be provided in each biennium, bringing the total number of reports to be submitted to the Assembly and other bodies to some 34, and (b) requests for special audits from the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly, of which, from 1994–1995 to mid-October 1998, some 27 requests for special audits had been received by the Board. The table below illustrates the growth in the total cost of external audit since 1994–1995.

Cost of external audit

Biennium	*Cost (United States dollars)*	*Percentage*
1994–1995		
Regular budget	2 980 400	34.60
Peacekeeping operations	2 296 700	26.70
UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF	2 293 530	26.70
Other extrabudgetary programmes	1 033 170	12.00
Total cost	**8 603 800**	
1996–1997		
Regular budget	3 130 157	33.80
Peacekeeping operations	2 154 260	23.30
UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF	2 229 020	24.10
Other extrabudgetary programmes	1 750 423	18.90
Total cost	**9 263 860**	
1998–1999		
Regular budget	3 079 670	32.60
Peacekeeping operations	1 994 720	21.10
UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF	2 269 740	24.00
Other extrabudgetary programmes	2 105 580	22.30
Total cost	**9 449 710**	
2000–2001		
Regular budget	3 478 200	33.90
Peacekeeping operations	1 809 860	17.60
UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF	2 436 150	23.70
Other extrabudgetary programmes	2 546 340	24.80
Total cost	**10 270 550**	

I.14. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1.28 of the proposed programme budget that the provision of $920,700 relates to salaries and common staff costs of the secretariat of the Board, which is proposed at one D-1, one P-3 and four General Service (Other level) posts. It reflects the establishment of a new P-3 post, which has been proposed in view of the increased workload of the secretariat, in particular the work related to special audits. The Committee recommends acceptance of the proposal.

I.15. With regard to resources relating to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (including United Nations participation in the costs of the secretariat of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund), table 1.13 of the proposed programme budget shows an amount of $5,562,800, before recosting, as the regular budget share in the cost of the central secretariat of the Fund. A resource growth of $1,553,900, or 38.7 per cent, over the previous biennium has been shown. The Advisory Committee has been informed that this will be partially offset by income to the United Nations from rental of premises, estimated at $1,216,300 for New York and $75,400 for Geneva, to be credited to income section 2 of the proposed programme budget. As explained in paragraph 1.36 of the proposed programme budget, the increase reflects the revised arrangements between the United Nations and the Fund in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/210 of 18 December 1998. As indicated in paragraph 1.37 of the proposed programme budget, implications for the regular budget of action to be taken by the Standing Committee of the Fund and the decision by the Assembly in connection with the recommendations of the Fund will be the subject of a statement of programme budget implications.

I.16. As indicated in table 1.16 of the proposed programme budget, requirements for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General amount to $27,568,300 before recosting. As shown in table 1.17, for the biennium 2000–2001, the total number of regular budget posts is 121, as compared with 118 for the previous biennium. An explanation for the establishment of the three additional posts is given in paragraphs 1.54 and 1.85 of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1.54 of the proposed programme budget, that the proposal for the establishment of a new P-5 post is to assist the Deputy Secretary-General in her responsibilities related to the ongoing reform process. There is also a proposal for the reclassification of a speech-writer's post from the P-2 to the P-3 level. The Committee was not convinced that a new P-5 post should be established, particularly in view of the information in paragraph 1A.3 of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/303. However, if the Secretary-General believes that there is a need in this area, the Committee believes that he should resort to redeployment of a post, in particular from offices involved in the reform process. The Committee recommends approval of the reclassification of the P-2 speech-writer's post to the P-3 level.

I.17. As indicated in paragraph 1.52 of the proposed programme budget, included in the estimates are resources of $639,000 for activities related to the Millennium Assembly and the Millennium Summit. As indicated in paragraph 1.56(a) the request for an amount of $564,000 is equivalent to the annual cost of five staff (1 at the Assistant Secretary-General level for the Coordinator, 1 each at the P-5 and P-4 levels and 2 at the General Service level); additionally, the Advisory Committee was informed that of the overtime requirements mentioned in paragraph 1.56(c), an amount of $15,000 relates to the Millennium Assembly. The Committee also notes that an estimate of $60,000, relating to the travel of the Coordinator of the Millennium Assembly and his staff, has also been shown in paragraph 1.58 of the proposed programme budget.

I.18. The Advisory Committee points out that no statement of programme budget implications has been presented in connection with the requirements in support of the Millennium Assembly and the Millennium Summit. The Committee believes that there is a trend towards reverting to regular budget financing when voluntary funding has fallen short or is no longer available or when existing regular budget resources are no longer able to absorb the cost for activities that were taken on mid-biennium without any presentation of programme budget implications. The Committee requests that in future the Secretariat adhere strictly to relevant decisions, regulations and rules concerning recommendations of all intergovernmental bodies that may result in financial or administrative implications for the Organization. In this connection, the Committee requested detailed information on posts and other related costs being utilized during the biennium 1998–1999 in support of the Millennium Assembly. The Committee also requested the Administration to identify the sections of the budget that were absorbing the costs during 1998–1999; it was informed that the cost of the staff in 1999 for the Millennium Assembly was being absorbed from sections 1 and 2 of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. The Committee was further informed that the resources were being provided under general temporary assistance and that no posts were being charged for the purpose of the staff related to the Millennium Assembly.

I.19. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1.53 of the proposed programme budget that estimated extrabudgetary resources amounting to $720,900 relate to three posts (1 D-2, 1 P-5 and 1 General Service) from the support account for peacekeeping operations; the posts have been funded from the support account since 1992. According to paragraph 1.53 of the proposed programme budget, their function is to assist in the provision of overall direction to departments with responsibility for peacekeeping and ensure effective coordination of the activities that have an impact on or contribute to peacekeeping. The Committee believes that the Secretary-General's role in peacekeeping and related activities is a permanent one, and from the information provided to the Committee by the representatives of the Secretary-General, the services provided by those three posts would appear to be required on an ongoing basis. For this reason, the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General propose, at the main part of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, various options for funding these posts on an ongoing basis.

I.20. As indicated in paragraph 1.57 of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $382,200 relates to outside expertise required by the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General to provide them with advice in various areas. On enquiry, the Committee was informed that during the biennium 1998–1999 outside expertise had been sought from consultants coming from Canada, France, Guatemala, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The Committee was not convinced of the need for some of the services provided by consultants. The Committee trusts that the expertise available within the Organization will be fully utilized before resorting to outside expertise.

I.21. The Advisory Committee was informed that resources amounting to $209,500 before recosting relate to outside expertise that would be needed in the Strategic Planning Unit. In this regard, the Advisory Committee recalls section III, section 1A, paragraph 6, of General Assembly resolution 52/220, whereby the General Assembly decided to keep under review the level of resources for consultants and experts in the Strategic Planning Unit. The Committee trusts that in the next budget submission a clear justification will be given in this regard.

I.22. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1.63 of the proposed programme budget that with regard to furniture and equipment for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, an amount of $200,400 relates to replacement of office automation equipment and that "no new resources have been made available to the Office since the biennium 1992–1993". The 1996–1997 appropriation in the amount of $294,000 relating to the Office's replacement programme had to be surrendered in response to the reductions mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995. The 1998–1999 appropriation, amounting to $67,600, reflected the partial restoration of the 1996–1997 requirements.

I.23. With regard to the Office of the Director-General in Geneva, the Advisory Committee notes from table 1.21 of the proposed programme budget that resources requested amount to $4,266,500 before recosting; an amount of $4,547,700 is estimated against extrabudgetary resources. The Committee notes from paragraph 1.66 of the proposed programme budget that the Office is exploring the establishment of a network "which would gradually include relevant institutions elsewhere in Europe and lead to the creation of a repository of expertise in support of good governance and sustainable economic and social development". In this connection, the Committee requests that the establishment of the network be the subject of a review to determine whether such activities are being or should be carried out by the Economic Commission for Europe or other substantive units involved with economic issues or the specialized agencies, rather than within the Office of the Director-General.

I.24. The Advisory Committee understands from paragraph 1.75 of the proposed programme budget that the Director-General in Vienna is responsible for all activities of the United Nations in Vienna. As outlined in the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/1998/16), these include liaison and representation as well as responsibilities for the United Nations Information Service, the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Division for Administrative and Common Services. The responsibilities of the Director-General in Vienna are combined with those of the Executive-Director of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. Furthermore, the Office of the Director-General is integrated with that of the Executive Director and is supported by resources of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. In its report, (A/53/7, paras. 51–57) the Committee described some of the problems that the United Nations Offices at Vienna had been encountering, including insufficient authority delegated to the Director-General in certain matters, insufficient funding for implementation of certain activities and the adverse impact on the quality and timely delivery of services as a result of economy measures. The Committee was informed by the representatives of the Secretary-General that the issues raised by the Committee had been addressed for the most part. The Committee has requested specific details in this regard, but did not receive the information.

I.25. In its resolution 52/220, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to bring the financial arrangements of the United Nations Office at Nairobi into line with those of similar United Nations administrative offices. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1.85 of the proposed programme budget that the establishment of two new posts (1 P-5 and 1 General Service (Local level)) has been proposed to assist the Director-General in the discharge of the functions of his Office as listed in paragraph 1.84 of the proposed programme budget. As indicated in table 1.25 of the proposed programme budget, total resources for this have been estimated at $396,700 (before recosting). In this connection, the Committee notes that the responsibilities of the Director-General have been combined with those of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme; other resources for the United Nations offices in Nairobi have been reflected in section 27G of the proposed programme budget. The Committee recommends the establishment of the two new posts.

Section 2
General Assembly affairs and conference services

I.26. As can be seen from table 2.1 (1) of the proposed programme budget, the overall level of resources proposed for the biennium for section 2 of the budget amounts to $423,593,800 before recosting, reflecting a net reduction of $3,451,000 (0.8 per cent) compared with the revised appropriation for 1998–1999.

I.27. As indicated in table 2.1 (2) of the proposed programme budget, the regular budget resources under this section would be supplemented by extrabudgetary resources, which are estimated at $7,279,900. The estimated percentage distribution of total resources within this section of the budget is shown in paragraph 2.10 of the proposed programme budget, while the distribution of regular budget resources is shown in table 2.1 (1).

I.28. The Advisory Committee notes from table 2.3 of the proposed programme budget that the level of resources would provide for 910 posts in the Professional category and above and 955 posts in the General Service and related categories (869 General Service and 86 Trades and crafts) funded by the regular budget. This total would reflect the abolition of one General Service post. The Committee was informed that as at 30 April 1999, the vacancy rate was 4.1 per cent for staff in the Professional category and 0.7 per cent for General Service staff, in the Department as a whole. The Committee requested a breakdown of the vacancy rates for New York, Geneva and Vienna, and was informed that as at 31 March 1999 the vacancy rate in New York for staff in the Professional category and above was 1.3 per cent, in Geneva it was 8.9 per cent and in Vienna it was 3.9 per cent. With regard to posts in the General Service category the rates were 0.3 per cent for New York, 1.7 per cent for Geneva and 4.1 per cent for Vienna.

I.29. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 2.63 of the proposed programme budget that a reclassification of four posts from the P-2 level to the P-3 level has been proposed in the interpretation, meetings and publishing services, New York, with the abolition of one P-2 post in the same area. The Committee also notes from paragraph 2.93 that one General Service (Other level) post has been proposed for abolition in library services, Geneva. Furthermore, the Committee notes from paragraph 2.111 of the proposed programme budget that the reclassification of a P-3 post to the P-4 level has been proposed in planning, development and coordination of conference services, Vienna. The Committee recommends acceptance of these proposals.

I.30. As indicated in paragraph 2.1 of the proposed programme budget, activities to be financed under this section fall under programme 27, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference services, of the revised medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001;[10] they also include library services in Geneva and Vienna, which fall under subprogramme 23.3, Library services, of programme 23, Public information, of the medium-term plan. As indicated in paragraph 2.6 of the proposed programme budget, the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services is also responsible for conference services in Geneva and Vienna. It is envisaged that this arrangement will allow the management of conference-servicing resources in an integrated manner, with a view to achieving the most efficient utilization of resources and enhanced coordination. However, the Advisory Committee recommends that the structure of the section be further reviewed. The Committee notes, for example, that while library services in New York are part of section 26, Public information, of the proposed programme budget, library services in Geneva and Vienna are part of conference services. The rationale for this needs to be explained.

I.31. The Advisory Committee notes that there are variations in the presentation of the proposed programme budget requirements for New York and the other duty stations. For example, the presentation of significant workload indicators for New York in the table following paragraph 2.62 is different from the presentation in the table following paragraph 2.85 in respect of Geneva.

I.32. The Advisory Committee believes that the presentation of outputs and workload indicators should be further refined. For example, paragraph 2.36 could be replaced with a table showing the number of intergovernmental and other bodies and related meetings and reports that are projected for preparation. The document could be made more user-friendly through the use of charts and appropriate graphs. Information that can be easily obtained from tables should not be repeated in narratives, which should instead concentrate on explaining changes in programme requirements and justifying the estimates.

I.33. The Advisory Committee was informed that in Geneva there was some coordination among the funds and programmes for linguistic and printing services. The Committee was informed that there were six different printing plants within the United Nations system in Geneva. However, ways were being sought to coordinate through common procurement and shared printing works, that is to say that the facility that could best do a particular printing job would be called upon to undertake it. The Committee requested information on printing costs and their comparative relationship to market costs, but this was not received. The Committee recommends that the printing service in Geneva be reviewed urgently so as to promote cost effectiveness and avoid duplication among all United Nations printing facilities in Geneva.

I.34. The Advisory Committee commends the Secretariat for the progress achieved so far in a number of services. The Committee was informed of a pilot project on remote interpretation for Nairobi. The Committee requested additional information on this, but it has not been received. The Committee requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences on the results of the project and future plans in this regard.

I.35. The Advisory Committee was also informed that videoconferencing was now a regular feature for the meetings of the Secretary-General's management group between locations such as New York, Geneva, Vienna, Rome and Nairobi. It should be noted that some intergovernmental and expert bodies have also been using videoconferencing, for example the Second Committee of the General Assembly, the Committee on Conferences (see A/53/827, para. 2), and the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee was informed that videoconferencing was used as necessary by the Steering Committee on Reform and Management, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, and its Subcommittee on Human Resources Management Reform. The Advisory Committee was informed, however, that the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services was not responsible for videoconferencing arrangements, which are the responsibility of the Telecommunication Service of the Office of Central Support Services.

I.36. The Advisory Committee is of the view that increased use should be made of videoconferencing and that efforts should be made to remove current technological impediments. Furthermore, there is a need to improve coordination and management of videoconferencing facilities. The Committee requests the Secretary-General, in the context of the next proposed programme budget, to provide information on the extent of the use of videoconferencing and the attendant savings and productivity gains.

I.37. The Advisory Committee was informed that the use of remote translation had expanded. This had also enabled duty stations to share workload. With regard to computer-assisted translation, the Committee was informed that the operational phase of its introduction was under way. All translators and editors are equipped with the necessary hardware, and 50 licenses for the software, plus support and training, were being purchased.

In this connection, the Committee requests that, in the context of the next proposed programme budget, the Secretariat provide workload indicators and the results achieved. The Committee was informed that the Secretariat was in touch with other international organizations actively involved in this field. The Committee believes that such cooperation is to be encouraged.

I.38. On the question of documents control, the Advisory Committee notes the measures taken to increase productivity and expects additional information to be included in the next proposed programme budget. The Committee was informed that efforts were under way to better manage and control stock of documents; in Geneva, there was stock control and greater use of electronic interface between departments and conference services and cooperation with user departments, which has led to increased efficiency in document production and distribution.

I.39. The Advisory Committee notes from table 2.2 of the proposed programme budget that under other staff costs a reduction in resources of $3,880,100 (before recosting) has been shown. The Committee also notes that reductions relating to temporary assistance for meetings are shown in paragraphs 2.48 (a) ($2,110,400), 2.73 ($1,669,100) and 2.120 ($1,058,000). As indicated in paragraph 2.28 (a) the decrease "reflects the impact of measures applied in the control of resources and capacity utilization and the expanded use of remote translation for meetings held away from Headquarters"; as indicated in paragraph 2.73 the decrease "reflects anticipated savings resulting from the implementation of cost-saving measures, better planning of resources and control over issuance of documentation". The estimates and the additional information given to the Committee do not contain sufficient justification for the proposed reductions. Bearing in mind the level and quality of services to be provided, the Committee requests the Secretary-General to provide further justification to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. The Committee believes that the decreases should be carefully analysed and broken down into components such as non-recurrent costs and efficiency gains. The Committee is of the view that in future the Secretariat should be more transparent in explaining the rationale for reductions under temporary assistance for meetings, including a better explanation of how a proposed reduction has been calculated.

I.40. Moreover, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the proposed reductions in temporary assistance for meetings need to be evaluated in the light of apparent and persistent instances of problems concerning the level and quality of a number of services, such as translation, interpretation and timely publication of official records. In this connection, the Committee recalls its observations in paragraphs VIII.144 to VIII.156 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999.[1] The Committee draws attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States (A/53/826) and the table of statistics for the periods from July 1996 to January 1999. For the period from February to April 1999, the Committee was informed that with regard to interpretation services, of the 93 requests received, 67 were provided with interpretation services and 26 were not; with regard to conference facilities, of the 325 requests, 320 had been met.

I.41. The Advisory Committee also draws attention to the reports of the Secretary-General on improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/53/827) and on the impact of economy measures on the delivery of mandated conference services (A/53/833) (for the Committee's comments, see chap. I above). The Committee also draws attention to paragraphs 52 to 55 of its report (A/53/7), in which it expressed concerns as to the long-term effects of economy measures. The Committee enquired to what extent its concerns had been addressed in the estimates for the biennium 2000–2001.

I.42. The representatives of the Secretary-General assured the Advisory Committee that the resources requested for the biennium 2000–2001 would be adequate and that the workload, as well the demand for conferences, had stabilized. The estimates for the biennium 2000–2001 were based on the conference services workload during 1998–1999.

I.43. The Advisory Committee requested an explanation of the discount factor used to take account of meeting cancellations, that is the assumption that not all programmed meetings are actually held. In this connection, the Committee recalls section II of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, in which it, *inter alia*, called for the most effective utilization of conference-servicing resources. The Committee was informed that the overprogramming factor is determined per committee based on an assessment of the past practice of that specific body. For example, if a committee is entitled to 10 meetings per week in a three-week session, but has usually cancelled three meetings each week, an overprogramming factor of 30 per cent would be applied to that session. The Secretariat takes this information into account when determining the likely number of meetings requiring services during a given period, and adjusts the recruitment of temporary staff as necessary and/or schedules ad hoc meetings to use the resources expected to be freed by cancellations. Through the latter procedure, the Secretariat tries to use overprogramming to ensure that ad hoc requests in a given time-frame can be met from within existing resources.

I.44. The Advisory Committee notes that tables in respect of workload indicators (paras. 2.46 and 2.71) show an increasing trend in the number of calendar meetings without interpretation. The Committee requests that in the next proposed programme budget the reasons for this development be provided together with specific proposals to ensure adequate conference service coverage. The Committee also requests that the presentation of the tables on workload indicators be consistent between the duty stations, including the regional economic commissions.

I.45. With regard to comparative costs for translation services, the Advisory Committee was informed that non-local temporary assistance was the most expensive, followed by costs for established posts and local temporary assistance, with the least expensive being contractual services.

I.46. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on rates of self-revision for New York, Geneva and Vienna as follows:

	April 1997–March 1998	*April 1998–March 1999*
		(Percentage)
New York	47.8	51.1
Geneva	61.8	68.5
Vienna	64.4	66.9

I.47. As indicated in table 2.2 of the proposed programme budget, a reduction of $2,336,100 (before recosting) has been shown for contractual services. Of this amount, as indicated in paragraph 2.50 of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $1,892,400 relates to the non-recurrent cost for the Document Recording and Information Tracking System (DRITS). The balance of $443,700 is the net result of increases and decreases described in paragraphs 2.75, 2.83 and 2.96 and tables 2.32 and 2.43 of the proposed programme budget.

I.48. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its report on interpretation and translation issues (A/53/507), it had discussed the question of a cost-accounting system for conference

services. The Committee requests that the Secretary-General provide information on progress in this regard in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002–2003. The Committee recalls that the access to the optical disk and use of income therefrom were also discussed in the report. The Committee enquired as to the implementation of its recommendations as approved by the General Assembly but has not yet received this information.

Part II
Political affairs

II.1. Part II of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 covers section 3, Political affairs; section 4, Disarmament; section 5, Peacekeeping operations; and section 6, Peaceful uses of outer space. The total estimate of $241,623,400 represents the regular budget requirements for the biennium 2000–2001 for sections 3,4,5 and 6 of the proposed programme budget.

Section 3
Political affairs

II.2. The Secretary-General's regular budget requirements under section 3 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated, before recosting, at $127,888,500, which reflects a decrease of $14,204,100, or 9.9 per cent, compared with the appropriations for the biennium 1998–1999. The extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $8,920,100.

II.3. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 3.9 and 3.85 that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/206, the Secretary-General has included in his proposed programme budget a provision of $86.2 million for special political missions as yet not mandated but anticipated to be undertaken in the biennium 2000–2001 at the request of the Security Council and/or the Assembly.

II.4. As shown in table 3.1 of the proposed programme budget, the net decrease of $14,204,100 in regular budget requirements is due mainly to a lower estimate for special political missions than the level of appropriations for the biennium 1998–1999. The table below provides a list of special political missions for 1998–1999 and the status of expenditures as of 30 April.

		Authorizations	Expenditures
		(Thousands of United States dollars)	
1.	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Africa	331.5	124.0
2.	Representative and Regional Humanitarian Adviser of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	2 101.1	1 037.4
3.	United Nations Office in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea	2 065.6	1 275.4
4.	United Nations Office in Burundi	3 655.1	2 572.9
5.	Office of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in Cambodia	2 004.5	995.9
6.	United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia	3 696.5	2 423.9
7.	Special Envoy to Sierra Leone	1 045.3	1 042.0
8.	United Nations Political Office for Somalia	2 470.3	1 642.7
9.	Central American Peace Process	355.8	166.4
10.	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan	9 991.3	3 245.9
11.	United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala	59 222.8	36 040.4
12.	International Civilian Mission in Haiti	13 533.8	6 529.9
13.	Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor (through 31 December 1998)	329.9	183.6
14.	Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the Controversy between Guyana and Venezuela	55.2	20.5
	Total	**100 858.7**	**57 300.9**

II.5. The Advisory Committee recalls paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 53/206, in which it decided that:

> **"the preliminary estimate of resources for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 should therefore include a provision for special political missions, in the amount of 86.2 million dollars at revised 1998–1999 rates, which should be reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, and that additional requirements shall continue to be treated in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213".**

The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that special political missions, for which a provision of $86.2 million is made, may include, but are not limited to, the missions reflected in the paragraph above. The utilization of the provision for special political missions would be subject to individual legislative mandates and approval by the Assembly as and when the Security Council and/or the General Assembly establish or renew such mandates. The Committee was further informed that detailed justification of resource requirements would be submitted to the Assembly through the Committee in the same manner as statements of programme budget implications and revised estimates are currently presented in connection with special political missions.

II.6. In response to the Committee's query regarding the rationale for moving the cost of special missions from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Department of Political Affairs, the Secretariat provided the following:

> **"The Department of Political Affairs carries out the activities of programme 1 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations carries out the activities under programme 2. Under programme 1, Political affairs, three of the six subprogrammes relate to activities**

> carried out by special political missions under the direction of the Department of Political Affairs. These are subprogramme 1, Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts; subprogramme 2, Assistance and support to the Secretary-General in the political aspects of his relations with Member States; and subprogramme 3, Electoral assistance. Accountability at the intergovernmental levels with respect to political missions is the responsibility of the Department of Political Affairs, which interfaces with the Security Council and the General Assembly in that connection. On that basis and in order to reflect activities under the section undertaking the programme of work as defined in the medium-term plan, the resource requirements for special political missions have been transferred from the section where the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is reflected to the section where the Department of Political Affairs is located.
>
> "The change ensures full compliance with regulation 4.1 and rule 104.1 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation".

II.7. The Advisory Committee also requested the Secretariat to clarify the role of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Management in administration of funds for special political missions and was provided with the following:

> "Prior to the establishment of a political mission, the Department of Political Affairs determines the area of operation of the mission, the staffing required to undertake the activities called for by its mandate, consultation with the Government where the mission is to be located, as well as with other Member States, as required. As soon as this process is finalized and the mode of operation of the political mission is determined, the Department of Political Affairs requests the Field Administration and Logistics Division to translate these requirements to estimates of resources.
>
> "In the process of determining the estimated resources, other factors are incorporated by the Field Administration and Logistics Division, particularly those relating to logistics, communications, transport, etc. The estimates are then submitted to the Programme Planning and Budget Division for review and approval. Subsequently, the related report requesting appropriation is submitted to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee. Once an appropriation is approved or commitment is authorized by the General Assembly, the related allotment advice is issued by the Programme Planning and Budget Division to the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, with the Director of the Field Administration and Logistics Division as certifying officer. The Field Administration and Logistics Division then sub-allots to the mission concerned. Expenditures are reported by the mission to the Field Administration and Logistics Division. In the context of the preparation of the performance reports, the mission submits an estimate of resources to the Field Administration and Logistics Division for review and transmission to the Programme Planning and Budget Division. The level of resources is again reviewed by the Programme Planning and Budget Division, taking into account changes in currency and inflation as well as other factors. The related expenditures are reported in the context of the performance reports submitted to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee, following which adjustments to the level of resources are approved by the General Assembly.
>
> "However, in cases of smaller political missions or those at the start-up stage, the Department of Political Affairs provides the administrative backstopping by itself. In those cases, the Executive Office of the Department for Political Affairs performs

> all the functions of the Field Administration and Logistics Division as described above, and the Executive Officer is the certifying officer."

The Committee requests that criteria be established to clearly define which missions fall under the category of "smaller political missions" referred to in the above paragraph.

II.8. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that as of 30 May 1999, the Secretary-General had authorized $3.6 million as commitments relating to maintenance of peace and security for 1999 under the terms of paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution 52/223 of 22 December 1997, as follows:

	Thousands of United States dollars
United Nations Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1 January to 30 June 1999)	314.2
Security Council panels on Iraq	331.1
United Nations assistance to former President Nyerere's initiative: Burundi peace process	143.9
Expert studies on ways of tracing violations of the measures regarding arms trafficking, oil supply and the diamond trade, as well as the movement of UNITA funds	90.5
Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Iraq (through 30 June 1999)	153.8
Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor (12 February to 11 August 1999)	219.4
Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo Peace Process	192.7
United Nations Peace-building Office in Guinea-Bissau (15 April to 31 December 1999)	2 147.2
United Nations information-gathering mission on Liberia	43.9
Total	**3 636.7**

II.9. The Advisory Committee was informed that there were 13 representatives of the Secretary-General in special political missions appointed at different levels. Upon request, the Committee was provided with the following guidelines for designating the level for representatives of the Secretary-General:

> **"A Special Representative of the Secretary-General is normally appointed to head a multi-disciplinary mission, on a resident basis, when it is established by the Security Council or the General Assembly. A Special Envoy is appointed by the Secretary-General to help his good offices efforts. The level of a Special Representative or a Special Envoy, usually at the Assistant Secretary-General or the Under-Secretary-General level, depends on one's qualifications as well as the size of a mission for which he/she is responsible. For smaller political missions, Representatives of the Secretary-General are appointed, also on a resident basis, at the D-2 level" (see the last sentence of para. II.7 above).**

II.10. The Advisory Committee points out that over 70 per cent of the Secretary-General's commitment authority under the terms of paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution 52/223, that is, $5.0 million per year during the biennium 1998–1999, was utilized during just five months of 1999. The Committee believes that this trend should be monitored and reported to the Assembly on a regular basis (see also chap. I above).

II.11. As indicated in table 3.3 of the proposed programme budget, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the 2000–2001 biennium is 195, reflecting no change in the overall number of posts compared with the biennium 1998–1999. However, the proposed staffing reflects a conversion of two temporary regular budget posts (1 D-1 and 1 P-5) of the Electoral Assistance Division into established posts. The proposed staffing also reflects an abolition of one General Service (Principal level) post and the establishment of one General Service (Other level) post in the Executive Office of the Department. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the proposed staffing changes.

II.12. A new organizational unit, the Policy Planning Unit, is proposed through internal redeployment to it of two P-4 and two General Service (Other level) posts from the regional divisions of the Department of Political Affairs. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that this Unit had already been established. The functions of the Policy Planning Unit are outlined in paragraph 3.29 of the proposed programme budget; as indicated therein, in performing its functions, the Unit "will liaise with the Strategic Planning Unit in the Office of the Secretary-General and with similar units throughout the United Nations system". The Committee trusts that the establishment of the Policy Planning Unit will not impact negatively on other programmes of the Department of Political Affairs. The Committee also trusts that care will be taken to ensure that the newly created Unit does not duplicate or parallel functions of other units and offices of the United Nations. The Committee recommends that the existence of similar units be indicated in each relevant budget section of the next proposed programme budget.

II.13. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 3.57 of the proposed programme budget that requirements for general temporary assistance, which reflect an increase of $222,900 (before recosting), relate to the elimination of the accumulated backlog in the preparation of the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council,* for which a minimum of approximately 24 work-months each at the P-3 level and the General Service (Other level) would be required. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that resources devoted to the *Repertoire* during the biennium 1998–1999, consist of 80 work-months of Professional staff, 48 work-months of General Service staff and 25 work-months of consultants/temporary staff, for a total of 153 work-months. The Committee recalls that in paragraph II.18 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] it recommended that the accumulated backlog should be reviewed. Paragraph 27 of the Secretary-General's report on the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* and the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* (A/53/386) describes steps undertaken to expedite the preparation of supplements to the latter; the Committee also notes from paragraphs 32 (c) and (d), of the same report, that the *Repertoire* supplement covering the period 1985–1988 will be published before the end of 1999; the work on the eleventh supplement, covering the period 1989–1992, will be completed by the end of 2001, but there will still be a backlog of the *Repertoire* for the period beginning 1993. The Committee welcomes the additional measures being taken by the Secretariat to bring the *Repertoire* up to date and trusts that the remaining backlog will be dealt with expeditiously.

II.14. As indicated in table 3.15 of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $2,609,300 (before recosting) is estimated for subprogramme 3, Electoral assistance; this compares with an appropriation of $2,615,700 for 1998–1999, a decrease of $6,400, or 0.2 per cent. The Advisory Committee found the narratives under this subprogramme to be confusing. As indicated in paragraph 3.42, "the main objective of this subprogramme is to render electoral assistance to Member States upon request and in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly". However, the exact nature of the assistance is not adequately described; there is no precision as between assessment missions and other activities of electoral assistance and a lack of co-relation between requests for electoral assistance and actual activities carried out. Moreover, the relationship between regular budget and extrabudgetary funding is not sufficiently spelled out. The result is an inability to fully understand the nature and extent of this subprogramme. For example, the reference to 50 electoral missions for 2000–2001 in paragraph 3.50 of the proposed programme budget appears to be an overestimate as compared with previous statistics given in the narrative, yet the actual resource requirement has gone down slightly from 1998–1999, as indicated above. The Committee requests that the presentation of this subprogramme be considerably improved in the next proposed programme budget. The Committee also points out that there appear to be no set criteria for determining which electoral assistance activity should fall under the regular budget and which should be funded from extrabudgetary sources. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General develop such criteria and report thereon in the context of the next proposed programme budget, including information on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 46/137 of 17 December 1991 and 52/129 of 12 December 1997.

II.15. With regard to subprogramme 4, Security Council affairs, the Advisory Committee requested, but was not provided with, detailed information on resources for each subsidiary organ of the Council, including the Compensation Commission, the extrabudgetary posts for which are not shown in table 3.18. The Committee requests that detailed information on both regular budget and extrabudgetary requirements for each subsidiary organ of the Security Council be made available to the General Assembly during the main part of its fifty-fourth session.

II.16. The Advisory Committee enquired into the rationale for reflecting the cost of travel of staff of the Decolonization Unit under section 2 and was informed that, since the resources for the travel of representatives undertaking the activities outlined in paragraph 2.20 of the proposed programme budget are being requested under section 2, the related travel of staff supporting those activities is also included there. That being the case, the Committee requests that travel of staff of the Decolonization Unit be clearly and separately shown and justified under section 2.

II.17. The issue of coordination between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been recently reviewed by the Advisory Committee, and its related observations and recommendations are contained in paragraph 18 of the Committee's report on the proposed budget estimates for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 (A/53/901).

Section 4
Disarmament

II.18. Under section 4 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $13,498,400 (before recosting), which reflects an increase of $522,500, or 4.0 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $12,975,900 for the biennium 1998–1999. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $4,348,500 for 2000–2001.

II.19. Post requirements under section 4 for 2000–2001 (see table 4.3) include 48 regular budget posts (30 Professional and 18 General Service), reflecting an increase of one P-3, one P-2 and one General Service (Principal level) posts and an abolition of one General Service (Other level) post. The proposed staffing reflects also a reclassification of a P-5 post to the D-1 level.

II.20. As indicated in paragraph 4.18, the establishment of a P-3 post in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch is proposed for the development and maintenance of the database on weapons of mass destruction and for the preparation of and conduct of seminars and workshops on the subject; a new P-2 post is proposed in the Monitoring, Database and

Information Branch to strengthen its research and monitoring capacity. The proposed establishment of one General Service (Principal level) post and abolition of one General Service (Other level) post reflect a realignment of functions between the Administrative Office of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Executive Office of the Department of Political Affairs following the reform measures. The Advisory Committee has no objection to these requests.

II.21. The reclassification of a P-5 post in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch to the D-1 level is proposed, as indicated in paragraph 4.19, "in view of increased responsibilities related to multilateral disarmament agreements on weapons of mass destruction"; the D-1 will serve as Chief of the Branch and also as Secretary-General of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the proposed reclassification of the P-5 post to the D-1 level. At the same time, the Committee requests that the Secretary-General review the level of the post of the Chief of the Disarmament Branch in Geneva (who is also the Deputy to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament), currently at the D-1 level, and report the results of the review during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

II.22. The Advisory Committee was informed that the figure of $242,400 (before recosting) in paragraph 4.20 is misplaced. This amount refers to total requirements for general temporary assistance, which include the following:

(a) A provision of $72,700 for substantive support in connection with various meetings foreseen in the programme of work (1 P-5 for 6 months);

(b) A provision of $123,500 for secretarial support in connection with the preparation of meetings and for replacement of staff on sick and/or maternity leave (4 General Service (Other level) posts for a total of 24 months);

(c) A provision of $20,200 for secretarial support to the Conference on Disarmament and the activities of the Conference on Disarmament Secretariat and Conference Support Branch in Geneva (1 General Service (Other level) for 3 months);

(d) A provision of $26,000 for the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* (1 P-3 for 3 months).

II.23. As indicated in paragraph 4.28 of the proposed programme budget, an increase of $117,500 under grants and contributions is due primarily to the proposed payment of a daily subsistence allowance instead of a stipend for 25 fellows participating in the Department's fellowships programme. The Advisory Committee was informed that when the programme was set up, it had a duration of six months and the fellows stayed in Geneva and New York for a period of 3 months in each city. It was then assumed that the fellows would have enough time in one place to be able to secure affordable housing for the period of stay. However, over the years, the programme has been reduced to 8 to 10 weeks, with stays in Geneva, New York, The Hague, Tokyo, Vienna and, in most years, Bonn. The length of stay varies from about 4 days (e.g. The Hague and Vienna) to a maximum of 24 days (Geneva). Thus the fellows have to stay in hotels in the centre of the cities paying rates that absorb a large portion of the stipends paid to them. This situation imposes, in the view of the Secretariat, considerable hardship on the fellows. The Advisory Committee requests that payment of daily subsistence allowance to fellows be monitored to ensure that such payment continues to be warranted.

II.24. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that all three regional disarmament centres (Lomé, Lima and Khatmandu) are now operational, and each one of them is headed by a P-5 staff member; the directors of the centres in Lomé and Lima reported for duty on 1 December 1998 and the director of the Khatmandu centre is currently operating from New York. The Committee was also informed that the cost of operations (excluding the director's salary) of the centre in Lomé was $58,000 for 1998 and is estimated at $122,600 for 1999; the Trust Fund balance of the centre was $57,800 as of 31 May 1999. The cost of operations (excluding the director's salary) of the centre in Lima is estimated at $66,000 for 1999 (the centre was inactive in 1998) and the Trust Fund balance of the centre was $25,781 as of 31 May 1999. The Trust Fund balance of the centre in Khatmandu was $277,250 as of 31 May 1999; however, no information on the cost of operations is available for the centre, since, as indicated above, its director is operating from New York. The Committee enquired into the reason that the director of the Kathmandu centre was operating from New York and was informed that, owing to persistent and serious financial constraints, it was impossible for the centre to recruit any local support staff, and this arrangement will have to remain in effect until reliable means can be found to finance the operational costs of the centre.

II.25. The Advisory Committee notes that a provision is made for interpretation of the meetings of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (see para. 4.20) and for the rental of premises and equipment for the Committee's meetings. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/37 B of 6 December 1991, established the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The General Assembly, in its resolution 47/53 of 15 December 1992, requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide assistance to the Central African States in implementing the work programme of the Standing Advisory Committee. Since its establishment, the Standing Advisory Committee has held its meetings in the region. The venue of the meetings is determined by the Chairman of the Committee. The decision to hire interpreters locally is based on the fact that it is more economical.

Section 5
Peacekeeping operations

II.26. As shown in table 5.1 (1) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the regular budget requirements under section 5 for 2000–2001 amount to $80,432,600 before recosting, a decrease of $132,400, or 0.1 per cent, against the 1998–1999 appropriations. These requirements would cover activities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO). A provision for special political missions, which was previously reflected under this budget section, is now included under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

II.27. Extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $77,510,200 out of which $54,607,300 relates to the support account and $22,339,900 relates to the Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action (see table 5.1 (2)). As indicated in paragraph 5.11 of the proposed programme budget, the estimates for the support account are based on requirements contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the support account (A/53/854/Add.1). It is recalled that the report reflected requirements in the amount of $24.5 million and 293 support account posts for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 (ibid., tables 4 and 5). The Advisory Committee inquired as to the basis on which the estimated resources of $54.6 million for the support account for 2000–2001 was arrived at and was informed that the report of the Secretary-General was used as a basis, projected on a biennial basis instead of one year; New York standard costs for 2000–2001 were used.

II.28. The total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 is the same as during the biennium 1998–[illegible]99, namely, 358, including 4 temporary posts, as indicated in table 5.3 of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee notes from the same table that the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 is 305, including 287 posts funded from the support account and 18 posts funded from the Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action.

II.29. It is recalled that the General Assembly, in the context of its consideration of the support account requirements for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 approved 400 posts, compared to 406 posts requested by the Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Secretariat is currently looking into possibilities for redeployment of six support account posts from other budget sections to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations instead of the six new support account posts, which were requested for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations by the Secretary-General in his report on the support account (A/53/854/Add.1); the Secretariat is not in a position at this time to identify those posts to be provided to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations through redeployments from other sections of the budget.

II.30. The Advisory Committee notes from the budget submission for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that resources other than staff costs and extrabudgetary funds relating to subprogrammes 2, Operations; 3, Field administration, logistics support and mine action; and 4, Military and civilian police advice and planning, are reflected under subprogramme 1, Executive direction and management. The Committee requests that the presentation be reviewed.

II.31. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 5.19 of the proposed programme budget that the increase of $586,100 under other staff costs is partly attributable to processing the backlog related to the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* ($363,400) and the backlog related to the processing of claims on contingent-owned equipment ($112,800); the estimate for the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* would provide for 24 work-months each of one P-4 and one General Service posts, while the estimates related to the backlog of claims on contingent-owned equipment represent the cost of four General service posts for six months during the biennium, that is, a total of 24 work-months. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the result of the utilization of general temporary assistance resources, as far as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was concerned, would be the completion of articles 40 to 54 and 106 of Volume III, Supplement 6, of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* covering the period 1979–1984 (see part III, sect. 8 below).

II.32. With regard to the processing of the backlog of claims on contingent-owned equipment, the requested provision for general temporary assistance would facilitate, according to the Secretariat, the time-consuming task of obtaining clarifications from Governments and the verification of the amounts claimed, as well as facilitate the processing of claims, the completion of which would be reflected in the relevant final performance reports for UNPF, UNOSOM, UNAMIR and UNMIBH, which will be submitted to the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-fourth session. The Advisory Committee points out that since activities related to contingent-owned equipment are funded from the support account, the Secretary-General, before allotting resources for this purpose from the regular budget, should ascertain whether these activities should indeed be carried out from the support account and propose, accordingly, a transfer of all funding relating to contingent-owned equipment from the regular budget to the support account.

II.33. The Advisory Committee also sought clarification in respect of the one-time requirement in the Executive Office to finalize the classification process in the Department ($18,800) and was informed that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations "is attempting to reconcile the reduced number of staff following the phasing out of gratis personnel, and, where necessary, will request reclassification of a number of posts. The funds requested are required to enable the Department to carry out this process prior to requesting reclassification officially". The Committee has no objection to this request.

II.34. A provision of $201,600 (before recosting) for travel of staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which reflects an increase of $20,800, is detailed in paragraph 5.21 of the proposed programme budget. In addition, as shown in table 5.5 (2) a much larger provision for travel ($1,342,600) in the Department's budget for the coming biennium is projected under extrabudgetary funding. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that there was currently no written guideline for determining which travel of Department staff should be funded by different sources of funding. However, travel of staff who are funded from trust funds is also charged to the trust fund. For travel undertaken by staff of the Field Administration and Logistics Division related to various technical/logistics/financial aspects of a peacekeeping mission, such travel is normally provided from the budget of the mission itself, including the budget of special political missions. Travel of staff for non-mission-related activities is charged to the regular budget or the support account. Assessment missions for potential missions are initially charged to the regular budget or the support account and then reversed to the mission account if the mission comes to fruition; if not, then the regular budget or the support account will bear the cost of that travel. The Committee trusts that resources for travel will be managed effectively and travel under the regular budget will be carefully coordinated with travel under the support account and other extrabudgetary sources. The Advisory Committee is also of the view that written guidelines should be worked out to indicate which travel of Department staff should be funded by specific sources of funding, namely, the regular budget, the support account, other extrabudgetary funds and budgets of specific peacekeeping operations.

II.35. A provision of $16,400 (before recosting), is requested under contractual services to cover the cost of translation into five languages of papers and studies produced by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that those documents were not considered official publications, the provision for translation of which is included under section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services. The Committee questions whether the provision of $16,400 would be sufficient to cover the range of translation for which the amount is requested.

II.36. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 5.23 and 5.26 of the proposed programme budget that estimated requirements under general operating expenses and supplies and materials are based on the assumption of 140 staff, although there are only 55 regular budget posts in the staffing table of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Committee was informed, upon request, that in addition to those posts, the regular budget estimates for communications, maintenance of office automation equipment and supplies and materials would also provide support to 85 posts funded from the support account. The Committee points out that the proposed programme budget does not contain any explanation of the rationale for the assumptions used in estimating the support account backstopping requirements from the regular budget. The Committee requests that future budget submissions indicate specifically all regular budget provisions made for backstopping extrabudgetary activities.

II.37. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 5.37 (c) (ii) d. of the proposed programme budget that among outputs to be delivered under subprogramme 3, Field administration, logistics support and mine action, is the "management of 24 trust funds and development of a trust fund database to ensure availability of timely management information, including cost plans and allotment requested". The Committee recalls that this output replicates the one that was foreseen for the biennium 1998–1999, and that the development of a trust fund database was welcomed by the Committee in paragraph II.40 of its previous report.[1] In response to a query raised by the Committee as to why the database on trust funds had not been completed, the Secretariat indicated that the Finance Management and Support Service of the Field Administration and Logistics Division was supported, until 28 February 1998, by 24 gratis personnel, including three in the area of systems support; in view of the phasing out of the gratis personnel which commenced in 1997 and 1998 and the subsequent delays in the recruitment of staff, it had not been possible to complete the task. According to the Secretariat, the frequent power interruptions in the UNITAR building and the need to devote efforts to upgrading the peacekeeping database and to deal with the year 2000 issue had also contributed to the delays in the establishment of the trust fund database; it is envisaged now that the database for the trust funds would be completed by early 2000.

II.38. The Advisory Committee points out that all redeployments related to the organizational changes in the structure of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should have been better explained and substantiated in the proposed programme budget to give a clearer picture of resource movement from one area of activity to another. The Committee requests that this be done in future budget submissions.

II.39. With regard to the coordination between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, see paragraph II.16 above. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that discussions were under way to introduce more streamlining between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Management, including more delegation authority from the Office of Human Resources Management to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Review was also under way to consider more delegation of authority to the field, especially in the area of procurement and write-off of property losses. The Committee trusts that delegation of authority from the Office of Human Resources Management to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will be consistent with the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/221. The Committee also recalls that the Board of Auditors, in paragraph 37 of its financial report and audited financial statements for the period ending 30 June 1998[11] expressed concern that "amounts written off at the field mission level under delegated authority had not been reported to the Board". The Committee trusts that necessary measures will be taken in response to the Board's concern, as well as to the observations and recommendations of the Committee regarding losses of United Nations property of peacekeeping operations contained in its report on the issue (A/53/895, para. 51–54).

II.40. The proposed budget for UNTSO reflects, as shown in table 5.18 of the proposed programme budget, negative resource growth of $965,000, resulting from a decrease under supplies and materials ($38,200) and furniture and equipment ($1,195,900) which is somewhat offset by an increase under staff costs ($21,400), travel ($25,900) and general operating expenses ($221,800). No change is reflected in the proposed post requirements for UNTSO for the coming biennium (see table 5.19).

II.41. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 5.49 (b) of the proposed programme budget that a new provision of $21,400 is made for interpreters "to meet the needs in Naquora". Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the need arose for interpreters to accompany the military observers along the patrol areas since they do not speak the language/dialect used in the area of operation.

II.42. As indicated in paragraph 5.50 of the proposed programme budget, a total provision of $2,876,300 (before recosting) under travel comprises $57,200 for travel of staff and $2,819,100 for emplacement and return of military observers. The resource growth of $25,900 under travel reflects the mission's share of the travel of departmental staff to visit the mission area on various assignments. The Advisory Committee was informed that military observers in UNTSO rotate every 12 months and that there were three cases of early repatriation during 1998–1999, the related costs of which were borne by the respective Governments.

II.43. The resource growth of $221,800 under general operating expenses is attributable to increased premiums in respect of the UNTSO fleet of 182 vehicles ($147,100) and to the need to improve grounds maintenance ($74,700).

II.44. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the growth of $74,700 in requirements for grounds maintenance was due to the fact that the existing arrangements at UNTSO headquarters are not sufficient to maintain the grounds at acceptable standards. Prior to the biennium 1998–1999, five local staff were responsible for grounds maintenance. During the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 and owing to the streamlining of UNTSO, it was anticipated that special services arrangements equivalent to two staff members would be sufficient to maintain the grounds. Experience during the first year of the biennium 1998–1999 proved that the arrangements proposed in the context of the 1998–1999 budget were not satisfactory and that it would be necessary to increase provisions for that purpose, equivalent to approximately two additional staff on special services arrangement (i.e., 4 as opposed to 5 staff prior to 1998–1999).

II.45. The Advisory Committee points out that a significant decrease in resource requirements for furniture and equipment, which represents a negative resource growth of almost 30 per cent, is not explained in the budget submission. According to the additional information provided to the Committee upon request, owing to reductions in the biennium 1996–1997 called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/214, replacements and acquisitions were deferred to the biennium 1998–1999, the 1998–1999 appropriation therefore reflected a catch-up programme to restore resources to their levels prior to the cost-saving exercise. The two objects most affected are: (a) replacement of data-processing and office automation equipment (a reduction of $784,400) and (b) replacement of vehicles (12 vehicles less than in 1998–1999, a reduction of $364,600).

II.46. The proposed budget for UNMOGIP reflects, as shown in table 5.20 of the proposed programme budget, resource growth of $811,000, or 5.7 per cent, which is attributable to an increase under other staff costs ($146,400), travel ($43,700) and general operating expenses ($755,400); these are somewhat offset by a decrease under supplies and materials ($50,600) and furniture and equipment ($83,900). No change is reflected in the proposed post requirements for UNMOGIP for the coming biennium (see table 5.21).

II.47. The Advisory Committee points out that the increase of $43,700 under travel, which covers travel of staff to the mission area on various assignments (see para. 5.60), is not explained in the budget submission. The Committee was provided, upon enquiry, with a list of travel envisaged under the mission's budget for 2000–2001. The list includes, *inter alia*, the following: an annual trip of the Chief Military Officer to Headquarters to update the Secretary-General on the political situation of the mission (7 days each trip); an annual trip of the Chief Administrative Officer to Headquarters in connection with the annual conference of chief administrative officers (7 days each trip); one trip to Headquarters for official business (3 days); and an annual trip of a political officer from Headquarters to assess/evaluate the political situation in the mission area (3 days each trip). The Committee is of the view that efforts should be made to streamline the travel programme by reducing

the number of trips and the duration of travel; also, wider use should be made of electronic means of communication available in the mission.

II.48. As indicated in paragraph 5.62 of the proposed programme budget, the increase of $755,400 under general operating expenses relates mainly to the rental of aircraft owing to higher monthly rental rates, an increase in the monthly subsistence allowance of aircrew and new provisions for positioning and depositioning costs, aircraft handling charges and painting. The Advisory Committee was also provided, upon request, with additional information on the management of air operations in UNMOGIP, according to which an assessment of the aircraft operations in UNMOGIP indicated that the current Beechcraft-200C was not suitable. It was also indicated that there was a need for an aircraft with higher performance capacity to climb safely on one engine in high elevations in the Himalayas, at an altitude of up to 1,830 metres, with landing and take-off distance of as short as 915 metres.

II.49. As shown in table 5.22 of the proposed programme budget, net resource growth of $25,100 in the proposed budget for UNSCO reflects an increase of $322,700 under other staff costs, which is partially offset by a decrease under travel ($39,300), general operating expenses ($150,400), supplies and materials ($13,000) and furniture and equipment ($94,900). No change is proposed in post requirements for UNSCO for the coming biennium (see table 5.23).

II.50. The Advisory Committee notes that no provision is made for extrabudgetary resources of UNSCO for the coming biennium, compared to $1.1 million estimated for 1998–1999. According to the clarification received, upon enquiry, from the Secretariat, the lack of a projection of extrabudgetary funding for 2000–2001 reflects the absence of firm commitments; however, if the pattern of funding follows previous bienniums, an amount of approximately $1.0 million could be expected for 2000–2001.

II.51. The growth of $322,700 under other staff costs reflects, as indicated in paragraph 5.74, "the realignment of the provisions under general temporary assistance to the standards used in costing salaries and common staff costs corresponding to the 25 approved positions". **The Advisory Committee recalls its observation in paragraph II.33 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for 1996–1997[9] that "these posts should have been disclosed in the staffing table". The Committee reiterates that view (see also chap. I above).**

II.52. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 5.84 of the proposed programme budget that a provision of $10,500 is made under grants and contributions for "rental of sound system equipment, temporary assistance, supplies and costs of publishing reports". **The Committee requests that a review be made to determine whether these costs should not be better budgeted under such objects of expenditure as general operating expenses, general temporary assistance and supplies and materials.**

Section 6
Peaceful uses of outer space

II.53. As shown in table 6.1 (1) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General's estimate for section 6 amounts to $4,024,200 before recosting, an increase of $89,400, or 2.2 per cent, against the 1998–1999 appropriations. Extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $452,000 (see table 6.1 (2) of the proposed programme budget).

II.54. As indicated in paragraph 6.14 of the proposed programme budget, the resource growth of $40,500 results from the proposed reclassification of a P-3 post to the P-4 level "owing to changes in the functions of the post from training activities to greater responsibilities in advisory services on space technology and its applications, in particular in the area of remote sensing". The Advisory Committee has no objection to the proposed reclassification.

II.55. The Advisory Committee recalls its observation in paragraph II.51 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999[1] that "more has been programmed and more reports projected than can reasonably be implemented with resources available". The Committee notes from table 6.3 of the proposed programme budget that an interim report on the programme performance during the first half of 1998–1999 has been submitted to the Office of International Oversight Services for review. The Committee was informed that the results of the review have not been yet finalized; however the implementation of the work programme is on target.

II.56. The Advisory Committee points out that the work programme of the Office for Outer Space Affairs for the biennium 2000–2001 seems as extensive as that of the current biennium. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Office for Outer Space Affairs relies on a network of outside space agencies in the process of planning and implementing its work programme.

Part III
International justice and law

III.1. The estimates under part III of the proposed programme budget total $57,562,800 and cover section 7, International Court of Justice ($22,263,100), and section 8, Legal affairs ($35,299,700), for 2000–2001.

Section 7
International Court of Justice

III.2. The Advisory Committee takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the consequences that the increase in the volume of cases before the International Court of Justice has on the operation of the Court (A/53/326 and Corr.1). The Committee commends the Court for action taken to address increasing workload in the context of budgetary stringency. In this connection, the Committee recalls that appropriations for the Court amounted to $19,316,000 for 1994–1995 and $19,985,900 for 1996–1997.

III.3. The estimate for section 7 for the biennium 2000–2001 amounts to $21,314,700 before recosting, representing an increase of $655,100 or 3.1 per cent as compared with appropriations of $20,659,600 for 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee was informed that the estimates were prepared before a dramatic increase in the number of cases. The Committee was informed that after the estimates were prepared 10 more cases were submitted and that for 2000–2001, the likely workload would be almost twice what it has been up to now. The Committee recommends that the resource implications of this situation be reviewed in order to ensure that the ability of the Court to discharge its mandate is not adversely affected.

III.4. The Advisory Committee notes from table 7.3 and paragraph 7.10 of the proposed programme budget that a total of 58 established posts (26 in the Professional category and above and 32 General Service) are being requested for 2000–2001, representing an increase of four established posts (2 P-4 and 2 P-2) as compared with a total of 54 established posts

(22 in the Professional category and above and 32 General Service) for 1998–1999. In addition, three General Service temporary posts are being requested under the regular budget for 2000–2001, the same number as in 1998–1999.

III.5. With regard to new posts, according to the information contained in paragraph 43 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/326 and Corr.1), the Court's request for additional staff resources would translate to seven new posts. However, the proposal contained in the proposed programme budget is for four new posts. Taking into account the information provided in the report of the Secretary-General, as well as what has been stated in paragraph III.3 above, the Committee recommends acceptance of the request.

III.6. The Advisory Committee was informed that the Court had 13 secretaries who were shared among the judges, including ad hoc judges. The Committee was also informed the problem of sharing secretaries will get worse, as the number of ad hoc judges is likely to increase from 14 to 22 in 2000–2001. In this connection, the Committee requests a report in the context of the next proposed programme budget on efficient management of the ad hoc judges system. Moreover, in chapter I above, the Committee has requested the Secretary-General to submit an analysis to the General Assembly at the main part of its fifty-fourth session, together with proposals, if necessary, for adjustment of the various levels specified in the resolution on unforeseen and extrabudgetary expenses.

III.7. Upon enquiry as to the cost benefits of translators on established posts as compared to freelance translators, the Advisory Committee was informed that provision for established posts resulted in non-quantifiable savings, which were not taken into consideration in the cost comparison with freelance translators, including the fact that translators on established posts often double as interpreters. Moreover, freelance translators and interpreters receive compensation for overtime, whereas staff occupying established posts do not. It was also indicated that travel costs (including one-half day of salary as compensation for travel time on each leg of a journey) of freelance translators are not included in the calculation of their costs, nor are administrative time in recruitment of freelance translators, contract preparation, and submission and processing of travel claims.

III.8. In paragraph 7.16 (a) of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $931,200, which includes a resource growth of $416,000, is requested for the elimination of the large backlog of volumes of the Court's documents and printing of documents. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that 40 volumes would be printed in 2000–2001, the rest would be printed in 2002–2003. The Committee has no objection to the resources requested to eliminate the backlog.

III.9. As indicated in paragraph 7.17 (a) of the proposed programme budget, a decrease of $349,800 is estimated for the contribution payable by the United Nations for its share of the general operating expenses of the facilities provided in the Peace Palace at The Hague for the Court. This is on the basis of experience gained in the occupation of the enlarged premises of the Court and takes into account the inflation factor of 2 per cent for 2000 and 2001 as compared with 2.5 per cent for 1998 and 1999, as requested by the Carnegie Foundation.

III.10. The Advisory Committee commends the Court's response to the Committee's request, contained in paragraph III.7 of its first report on the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] to explore vigorously the introduction of modern technology. The Court's reply is contained in table 7.7 of the proposed programme budget.

Section 8
Legal affairs

III.11. As shown in table 8.1 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General's estimate for section 8 for 2000–2001 amounts to $33,424,500 before recosting, representing an increase of $975,300 as compared with appropriations of $32,449,200 for 1998–1999. In addition, an amount of $4,819,900 is expected under extrabudgetary resources, as compared with the estimates of $6,544,800 for 1998–1999.

III.12. With regard to presentation, the Advisory Committee recommends that narratives in subprogrammes 1 and 2 include comparative information for the previous biennium.

III.13. As indicated in table 8.3 of the proposed programme budget, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 is 144 (81 in the Professional category and above and 63 General Service), representing an increase of 2 regular budget posts as compared with the total of 142 (79 in the Professional category and above and 63 General Service) for 1998–1999. As indicated in the same table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for 2000–2001 is 16 (10 in the Professional category and above and 6 General Service), the same number as for 1998–1999.

III.14. Two new P-3 posts are proposed. One is for the United Nations Administrative Tribunal "so as to ensure continuous service, taking into account the workload of the Tribunal" (para. 8.27). The other post is for the General Legal Division "to handle the increased demand for legal services by the Division, particularly in the area of arbitration of commercial disputes, recovery of assets and cases involving staff members" (para. 8.55). The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of these requests.

III.15. In paragraphs 50 to 53 of the introduction and paragraphs 8.13 and 8.67 of the proposed programme budget, it is indicated that efforts will be made during the biennium to expedite the preparation and publication of supplements to the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 8.13 and 8.67 of the proposed programme budget that while the analytical summary of the practice of the principal organs pertaining to Articles of the Charter of the United Nations is the responsibility of 10 separate departments/offices in the Secretariat, the Office of Legal Affairs itself prepares studies on some 25 Articles of the Charter and chairs the Inter-Departmental Committee on Charter Repertory to coordinate the Repertory-related tasks.

III.16. The Advisory Committee was informed that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was also responsible for the preparation of a number of studies on individual provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and had a coordinating responsibility for a number of Articles in the economic and social areas for which other departments and offices have the initial drafting responsibility. The Committee notes from paragraph 53 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget that a total of $2.2 million would be requested for additional general temporary assistance for 2000–2001 for the work on reducing the backlog. In paragraph 8.74 of the proposed programme budget, a provision of $86,500 is requested for general temporary assistance specifically for reducing the backlog, for the preparation of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*. The Committee was further informed that a programme to eliminate the backlog has been prepared and is under implementation. The Committee was also informed that progress reports were submitted to the Sixth Committee. However, details about the programme are not shown in the introduction or in individual sections of the proposed programme budget. The Committee sought, but did not receive, information on the time-frame for the elimination of the backlog. This information should be provided in the next proposed programme budget along with an explanation of measures taken to ensure effective coordination on the elimination of the backlog, as well as to ensure timely production of future volumes.

III.17. As indicated in paragraph 8.51 (f) of the proposed programme budget, during the biennium 2000–2001, the focus of the Division of General Legal Services will be on "conducting or supervising the conduct of arbitrations or litigation concerning large-scale commercial disputes or other claims of a private law character against the United Nations". During its examination of the Secretary-General's proposals for peacekeeping operations for 1998–1999 and 2000–2001, the Advisory Committee requested and received some information in this regard. Upon further enquiry, the Committee was informed that in 11 arbitration cases arising from peacekeeping operations, which have been litigated to final award, settled or otherwise terminated since 1995, the amounts claimed totalled $70 million, while the amounts of the awards or settlement in those cases totalled $21 million. The Committee was further informed that with respect to costs related to those cases, the total amount incurred by the United Nations as of 15 June 1999 and related expenses of outside counsel representing the United Nations was $3.9 million. The Committee was also informed that the total amount incurred thus far in arbitration costs, including arbitrator's fees and expenses and charges of the arbitration institution, was $860,000; these figures did not take into account amounts that as of 15 June 1999, may have properly been incurred but not yet invoiced or paid.

III.18. It is the view of the Advisory Committee that a means must be found, consistent with legal requirements for confidentiality in certain matters, to allow for the General Assembly to assure itself that the liability of the United Nations, which is large (and potentially much larger), is being properly managed. In this connection, the Committee intends to revert to this subject in the context of its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on procurement-related arbitrations, to be submitted to the General Assembly early in its fifty-fourth session pursuant to Assembly resolution 53/217 of 7 April 1999. To assist it, the Committee, in accordance with financial regulation 12.7, has requested the Board of Auditors to conduct a specific examination of practices and procedures with regard to the handling of arbitration/claims cases by the United Nations administration.

Part IV
International cooperation for development

IV.1. The estimates under part IV of the proposed programme budget total $283,464,300 and cover section 9, Economic and social affairs ($113,822,600); section 10, Africa: New Agenda for Development ($6,337,200); section 11A, Trade and development ($95,302,400); section 11B, International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO ($20,170,900); section 12, Environment ($9,463,400); section 13, Human settlements ($14,633,300); section 14, Crime prevention and criminal justice ($6,175,600); and section 15, International drug control ($17,558,900).

Section 9
Economic and social affairs

IV.2. This section combines resources and programmes presented under three departments prior to the biennium 1998–1999. However, since the integration of the three departments, namely, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services, started after the initial budget for 1998–1999, direct comparison with past presentations of the proposed programme budget is not possible.

IV.3. As indicated in table 9.1 of the proposed programme budget, regular budget resources proposed under this section amount to $107,283,700 before recosting, an increase of $325,300; the reasons for the increase/decrease are explained in paragraph 9.9.

IV.4. Extrabudgetary resources have been projected at $217,022,400; as indicated in table 9.1, total resources for this section amount to $330,845,000 for 2000–2001.

IV.5. With regard to posts, the total number of posts funded from regular budget resources remains at 517, while posts funded by extrabudgetary resources show a decrease of 17, from a total of 55 during the biennium 1998–1999 to 38 for 2000–2001. With regard to vacancy rates, the Advisory Committee was informed that the average rate during 1998 for posts in the Professional category was 12.4 per cent; for posts in the General Service category the rate was 2.6 per cent. As of the end of April 1999, the vacancy rate for posts in the Professional category was 14.6 per cent, while the vacancy rate for posts in the General Service category was 0.9 per cent. The Committee was informed that measures were under way to reduce the vacancies in the Professional category.

IV.6. The Advisory Committee notes that the staff costs for the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 were calculated using a vacancy factor of 5 and 2.5 per cent for Professional and General Service posts respectively. The Committee urges the Department to step up recruitment measures in order to ensure the orderly implementation of mandates.

IV.7. As indicated in table 9.2 of the proposed programme budget, the requirement for posts amounts to $92,248,000 before recosting with $1,955,200 shown for other staff costs. The reduction of $1,254,500 for posts is due to non-inclusion of the cost of the interim secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as mentioned in paragraph 9.9 of the proposed programme budget.

IV.8. As indicated in table 9.1 of the proposed programme budget, resources have been distributed among the four components of this section: policy-making organs, executive direction and management, programme of work and programme support. For policy-making organs, an amount of $3,863,900, before recosting, has been requested under the regular budget for requirements related to 10 intergovernmental organs and expert bodies and for the servicing of three special sessions and meetings as indicated in tables 9.4 and 9.5 of the proposed programme budget. The bulk of the request, amounting to $2,961,800, before recosting, relates to the travel of representatives of intergovernmental bodies. On enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the estimate had been based on past experience, which also took into account a discount factor for non-attendance. The Committee notes from paragraphs 9.37 (a) and (b) that a total of $372,300 has been requested for approximately seven work-months each for 7 short-term staff (2 P-4, 1 P-3 and 4 General Service), as well as for overtime for the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the special session of the General Assembly in 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. In addition, as indicated in paragraph 9.39 of the proposed programme budget an amount of $307,900 has been requested for consultants and experts for follow-up to the Conference and for the special session. The Committee has no objection to these requests. However, the Committee expects that before recourse is had to these additional funds for short-term staff and consultants and experts, efforts should be made to use existing staff services available under the relevant subprogrammes of this section. The Committee notes that for travel of staff relating to the Conference and the special session, an amount of $133,700 has been requested, as indicated in paragraph 9.40 (b) of the proposed programme budget. The Committee enquired as to the need for external production of publications ($59,900), as indicated in paragraph 9.41 of the proposed programme budget, and was informed that this was done to ensure timely printing of booklets, pamphlets and materials in special glossy formats in connection with the follow-up to the Conference and for the special session of the General Assembly.

IV.9. With regard to executive direction and management, as indicated in table 9.6 of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $4,249,600, before recosting, has been requested. Table 9.7 shows a total of 14 posts for 2000–2001, as compared with 19 for 1998–1999. As indicated in paragraph 9.50, the 5 posts have been redeployed within the department to "substantive divisions". The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 9.106 that the reclassification of two P-3 posts to the P-4 level has been requested. Based on the information provided, the Committee recommends acceptance of the request.

IV.10. The establishment of the Office of Inter-Agency Affairs in the Department as part of the reform measures, and its role and functions, are set out in paragraphs 9.45 to 9.48 of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee requested and received the following information on the staff positions and related functions for the Office:

Staffing of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs as of June 1999

Professional category and above[*]

D-2	On non-reimbursable loan from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General Responsible for the overall direction and management of the Office
D-1	On non-reimbursable loan from UNDP Responsible for follow-up to Administrative Committee on Coordination decisions on Africa, strategic framework, strategic planning, globalization and matters relating to finance and development
P-5	On non-reimbursable loan from UNIDO Responsible for follow-up to Administrative Committee on Coordination decisions on relations with the private sector; development of the management system; preparation of the Administrative Committee on Coordination overview for the Committee for Programme and Coordination/Economic and Social Council and interaction with the United Nations Staff College
P-5	On non-reimbursable loan from UNCTAD Secretary of the Organizational Committee and responsible for all matters pertaining to the Administrative Committee on Coordination and Organizational Committee organization and follow-up.
P-5	On assignment from the Division of Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination/Department of Economic and Social Affairs Secretary of the Inter-Agency Committee for Sustainable Development; responsible for liaison with subsidiary machinery and focal point for information and management issues; liaison with civil society and Secretary of Non-State Actors Task Force/Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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[*] All Professional staff also have responsibilities for liaison with specific agencies, funds and programmes of the system with regard to their activities and dissemination of relevant information within the system.

General Service category

G-7 On assignment from Division of Economic and Social Council/Support and Coordination/Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Meetings Servicing Assistant

G-5 On non-reimbursable loan from UNFPA
Secretarial Assistant

Anticipated staffing additions

Professional category and above

Negotiations are under way to obtain on loan two additional Professional staff members: one from ICAO, the other from ITU. These Professionals are expected to deal with information/communication issues of the Office.

General Service category

Negotiations are under way to obtain two additional General Service staff on loan.

IV.11. The potential number of positions for the Office, according to the above information, is 11. However, the Committee notes that the cost of maintaining the Administrative Committee on Coordination Web site mentioned in paragraph 9.49 (b) has not been disclosed, nor does it appear in the above information provided to the Advisory Committee. In paragraph 9.53 funds have been requested, *inter alia*, for consultants and experts for work related to the Administrative Committee on Coordination, and in paragraph 9.54 an amount of $168,500 has been requested for travel of staff to service the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The nature of the specialization required for the Administrative Committee for Coordination documentation mentioned in paragraph 9.53 of the proposed programme budget has not been specified.

IV.12. From the information provided to it, the Advisory Committee has concluded that the cost of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs is not transparent. Furthermore, no clear statement has been made in the estimates of any agreement among the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination regarding the funding of the Office. The procedure followed thus far is ad hoc and appears to depend on the willingness of some members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to loan staff for the Office. This situation is not satisfactory. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the status of the financing of the Office be reviewed by the Secretary-General and that the full cost of the Office, including such items as staff costs, office space, furniture and equipment, travel, operating expenses and other support, be disclosed, regardless of the source of funding. In this connection, the Committee notes that the response to its recommendation in paragraph IV.4 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] as contained in table 9.33 of the proposed programme budget, is not satisfactory in particular as regards the cost of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its machinery. The Advisory Committee reiterates its recommendation. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in its report on the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1998,[12] had requested that the next report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination include a part related to the implementation of the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee in its report.[1]

IV.13. The Advisory Committee believes that the request in paragraph 9.52 for $193,400 for general temporary assistance to coordinate technical cooperation activities has not been justified. The Committee questions the rationale for employing short-term staff for the stated function, since the interdepartmental task force referred to in paragraph 9.50 and the support provided by the administrative unit for technical cooperation would not require additional short-term staff. In addition, the Committee does not see the rationale for transferring from executive direction, the 5 posts that were dealing with the transitional arrangements for coordination and then requesting short-term staff to continue coordination of technical cooperation activities. In the opinion of the Committee, existing staff should be used to provide the requisite coordination.

IV.14. The Advisory Committee also notes that adequate justification has not been made for requesting additional resources for consultants for the purposes set out in paragraph 9.53 of the proposed programme budget.

IV.15. With regard to travel for this section as a whole, the Advisory Committee notes that $4,848,700, before recosting, has been requested, showing an increase of $295,400. However, it is not clear how much travel is included for technical cooperation activities. An increase of $364,400 has been shown in table 9.6 for travel for executive direction and management. The Committee notes that as indicated in paragraph 9.54 of the proposed programme budget, the request for travel includes, for the first time, provision of travel expenses for panels of eminent personalities and experts attending meetings in conjunction with meetings of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996.

IV.16. An amount of $399,000, as indicated in paragraph 9.55 of the proposed programme budget, has been requested as the United Nations contribution for funding of activities relating to the Non-Governmental Liaison Service. On enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council was 1,851 (excluding 444 in the Commission on Sustainable Development roster) compared with 1,700 reported to the Committee during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. In this connection, the Committee recalls its observations in paragraphs IV.10 and IV.11 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] where the Committee had requested information on the total level of resources proposed for non-governmental organizations for the biennium. This matter has not been addressed by the Secretariat; the Committee reiterates its view "that the time has come to appraise the impact on the United Nations programme budget of the large increase in non-governmental organizations involved in the work of the United Nations since administration and cost implications will become more critical in view of the financial constraints facing the Organization". In future budgets, the Committee recommends that this information be included both as to the programmatic and financial aspects.

IV.17. As indicated in table 9.8 (1) of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $90,808,100, before recosting, has been requested for the programme of work under this section. As indicated in table 9.8 (2), $211,656,200 have been projected under extrabudgetary funding presented under seven subprogrammes. The seven subprogrammes are congruent with corresponding organizational units.

IV.18. With regard to the question of programme review, for several bienniums the Advisory Committee has called for more involvement of legislative bodies in reviewing work programmes, including publications. The Committee firmly believes that it is the programme formulating bodies which should, in the first instance, pronounce themselves on the work programme and publications that form the basis for the estimates that are submitted to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General. The Committee notes with satisfaction that many intergovernmental organs, particularly those in the regional commissions, have made commendable progress in reviewing the programmes of work and the publications under their purview (see chap. I above).

IV.19. In paragraph IV.19 of its report,[1] the Advisory Committee had expressed regret at the lack of evident involvement by the policy-making organs in the review of the publications programme. The Committee had recommended that "the intergovernmental machinery of the new merged department encompassing units of the three former departments become more actively involved in an in-depth review of its publications programme".

IV.20. The response to the Advisory Committee's recommendations, as set out in table 9.33 of the proposed programme budget, is unsatisfactory. The Committee points out that action taken by other Secretariat units and legislative bodies has been summarized in a number of sections of the proposed programme budget (sections 11A, 17 and 19). In this connection, the Committee welcomes the information on the increased cooperation between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD in the preparation of a number of reports. The Committee recommends that in the next budget submission such information be included in section 9, including reviews of publications by the intergovernmental machinery. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that in the presentation of the narrative under each subprogramme, the number of recurrent and non-recurrent publications estimated for the next biennium be indicated systematically. This has been done, for example, in the sections for the regional commissions and for UNCTAD. With the installation of the Integrated Meeting and Documentation Information System (IMDIS), the number of publications should be easy to provide in the narratives.

IV.21. With regard to management of technical cooperation activities, as indicated in table 9.2 (2) of the proposed programme budget, extrabudgetary resources projected for the biennium 2000–2001 amount to $217,022,400, reflecting a reduction of 7 per cent compared with the biennium 1998–1999. Resources projected from UNDP for operational projects amount to $165,000,000, reflecting a 10 per cent increase from $149,000,000 shown for the biennium 1998–1999. As regards resources from UNFPA for substantive activities, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Secretariat had not received information about the likely contribution from that programme. The number of posts funded from extrabudgetary resources, as shown in table 9.3, reflects a decrease of 17 posts or 30 per cent, while the resource reduction is 7 per cent. The Committee requested an explanation for this and was informed that if the component "other" in table 9.2 (2), which represents the total resources for technical cooperation projects in the field ($204,331,100 in 1998–1999 and $201,256,700 in 2000–2001) is excluded, than all the resources that are related to substantive activities and programme support activities would show a decrease from $29,594,600 in 1998–1999 to $15,765,700 in 2000–2001, or a decrease of 46 per cent, bringing the figure closer to the 30 per cent decrease in the extrabudgetary posts. In view of the level of extrabudgetary funding, the Committee enquired as to the reason for the support costs shown in table 9.1 (2) being only $9,273,400. The Committee was informed that this represented the overhead income available to the Department from the implementation of technical projects, which remained stable compared to 1998–1999 estimates of $9,203,600. The Committee also enquired about the sharp decline in the projection for travel, as reflected in table 9.2 (2), from $2,945,500 to $517,100, but did not receive an explanation.

IV.22. The purposes for extrabudgetary resources for this section are set out in paragraph 9.10 of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 9.50 that overall coordination of technical cooperation activities is provided through "an interdepartmental task force arrangement at the divisional director level, supported by the administrative unit dealing with technical cooperation, with the Assistant Secretary-General for Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs providing central oversight and policy guidance". In paragraph 32 of its report (A/52/7/Add.1), the Committee had stressed "the need to maintain the capacity of the Organization to execute the technical cooperation programmes, and recommends that the staffing resources for those activities be kept under review". The Committee recommends that in future budget presentations the level of resources to maintain that capacity should be clearly reflected.

IV.23. The Advisory Committee notes that the bulk of the technical cooperation funds are allocated to subprogramme 4, Sustainable development. The regular budget portion of the activities of the subprogramme represents only 8 per cent of the total resources for the subprogramme. However, the presentation of the narratives does not indicate clearly how the remaining 92 per cent of the resources under subprogramme 4 would be used for the purposes set out in paragraph 9.10 of the proposed programme budget. The Committee requests that this weakness be addressed in the next budget estimates for all the subprogrammes. The Committee also requests that information on the management of technical cooperation under section 9 should indicate the role of intergovernmental machinery, such as the Commission on Sustainable Development, in review of the programme of work. The Committee also requested information on the amount that had been spent so far from the $116,134,800 under subprogramme 4 for 1998–1999 (see table 9.16 (2)), and was informed that 18 months into the biennium, an amount of $54,617,019 had been spent. The Committee also requested information on the total expenditure under section 9 during 1998 from the extrabudgetary resources of $204,331,100 shown in table 9.2 (2), and was informed that $111,646,000 had been spent during the first 18 months of the biennium 1998–1999. In the opinion of the Committee, the level of delivery points to the need for a review of the process of project formulation, approval and implementation.

IV.24. The role of information technology in the operations under section 9 is considerable, as can be seen from the narratives. Under programme support, the Committee requested additional information on IMDIS. The Committee was informed that IMDIS was an integrated, Intranet-based programme-monitoring system being developed on behalf of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs in cooperation with the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The system had been developed as a pilot in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs during the biennium 1998–1999. The system will be refined with further testing and extension of the functionality and data sets as necessary to help ensure broad user acceptance in participating departments and offices. The Committee encourages the Department to expand the use of new technology in disseminating its products and in communication services. However, the Committee requests that in the next budget submission, clear information be provided on new technology projects and related costs for maintenance of existing and proposed projects under this section of the budget. The Committee is of the view that the budgetary presentation should reflect the level of coordination with other structures of the Secretariat, such as the regional economic commissions.

IV.25. As indicated in table 9.2 (1) of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $3,042,000 in regular budget resources has been requested for consultants and experts, an increase of $504,000, while, as indicated in table 9.2 (2), an amount of $2,898,900 has been projected against extrabudgetary resources, compared with $7,636,900 for 1998–1999, a decrease of $4,738,000. The Advisory Committee enquired as to the reasons for the decrease and was informed that it was due to a decrease in UNFPA and all other substantive trust funds, as reflected in table 9.1 (2). The Committee enquired as to how much of this amount had been spent on consultants and experts in 1998–1999 and was informed that total expenditures under the regular budget as at mid-July 1999 stood at $1,680,500, inclusive of $224,500 for desertification and at $3,417,900 under extrabudgetary resources.

IV.26. The Advisory Committee notes that in paragraph 9.61 resources for consultants have been requested for "policy issues under consideration by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in particular with respect to the various high-level policy dialogues"; in paragraph 9.93, resources have been requested, *inter alia*, "for the preparation of six studies related to priority issues as may be decided by the General Assembly at its special session"; and in paragraph 9.138 resources have been requested, *inter alia*, for undertaking "studies on specific themes on population and development that are expected to emanate from and as a follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly".

IV.27. From the above-selected examples, the Advisory Committee has concluded that in most cases consultancy funds are requested in anticipation that when a legislative body takes a decision, the expertise to carry out the mandate would not be available in the Secretariat. In that sense, the resources requested could be considered contingency funds, which might not be required should the mandate turn out to be within the capability of the Secretariat. This procedure is not strictly in accordance with the relevant provisions on consultants in section VIII of General Assembly resolution 53/221 (see section 11A below).

IV.28. However, the Advisory Committee acknowledges the fact that, based on experience in the past, it might be prudent for the Department to assume that implementation of some of the subsequent mandates decided upon by the legislative bodies might involve consultancy resources. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that in the future the Secretariat should, in all sections of the budget, differentiate clearly such contingency funds. The Committee further recommends that under this section of the proposed programme budget, the number of ad hoc expert groups requested and the related number of meetings be disclosed, preferably in tabular form, under each subprogramme. The Committee requests that it be provided with similar information for the last two bienniums, including the number of ad hoc expert groups actually convened (see section 11A below).

Section 10
Africa: New Agenda for Development

IV.29. Under section 10 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $6,013,100, before recosting, for 2000–2001 for the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for Development of Africa in the 1990s. The amount represents an increase of 14.9 per cent over the appropriation of $5,230,000 for 1998–1999. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $1,812,400, as compared with estimates of $2,147,500 for 1998–1999.

IV.30. As indicated in paragraph 10.4 of the proposed programme budget, the implementation of programme activities under this section will be under the joint responsibility of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Department of Public Information; the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, provides overall coordination and leadership of the programme. Programme support for subprogrammes 1 and 2 has been included in sections 9 and 16 of the proposed programme budget (see chap. I above).

IV.31. Post requirements for 2000–2001 under this section of the budget include 23 posts funded from the regular budget (14 in the Professional category and above, 8 General Service and 1 Local level); there are 5 extrabudgetary posts as compared with 8 for 1998–1999. The requests for four new posts are described in paragraphs 10.22 to 10.24 of the proposed programme budget. Of those four posts, a P-4 post and a Local level post would be deployed in ECA, while a P-3 post and a General Service post would be in the Department

of Public Information. The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of the requests for posts.

Section 11A
Trade and development

IV.32. Regular budget resources requested under this section of the proposed programme budget amount to $93,724,900 (before recosting), reflecting a resource growth of $428,500 resulting from increases/decreases under a number of objects of expenditure, as shown in table 11A.2 and explained in paragraph 11A.5 of the proposed programme budget. As indicated in table 11A.1 (2), extrabudgetary resources are projected at $39,526,700.

IV.33. The Advisory Committee recalls that in his report (A/52/898), the Secretary-General had outlined proposals for allocation of $5.5 million pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998. On enquiry as to the utilization of these "savings", the Advisory Committee was provided with the table below.

Utilization of "savings allocation" of 5.5 million dollars as at 28 May 1999

	Code	*Allotment*	*Expenditure*	*Commitments*	*Balance*
Sessions of the Conference (UNCTAD X)					
Expert groups	60	81 000	3 047	33 068	44 885
Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues					
Travel of experts to meetings	210	435 200	64 820		370 380
Commission on Trade in Goods, Services and Commodities					
Travel of experts to meetings	210	326 400	80 429	30 000	215 971
Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development					
Travel of experts to meetings	210	326 400	0	91 154	235 246
Executive direction and management					
Consultants	40	200 000	7 730	79 522	112 748
Division on Globalization and Development Strategies					
Temporary assistance	30	420 000	143 135	268 866	8 000
Consultants	40	210 000	9 407	1 438	199 155
Subtotal		**630 000**	**152 542**	**270 304**	**207 155**
Division on Investment Technology and Enterprise Development					
Temporary assistance	30	210 000	25 636	83 364	101 000
Consultants	40	210 000	1 000		209 000
Expert groups	60	30 000	0	12 175	17 825
Travel of staff	242	20 000	5 326		14 674
Subtotal		**470 000**	**31 962**	**95 539**	**342 499**

	Code	*Allotment*	*Expenditure*	*Commitments*	*Balance*
Division on International Trade in Goods and Service, and Commodities					
Consultants	40	340 000	42 735	8 500	288 765
Expert groups	60	300 000	0	88 931	211 069
Travel of staff	242	37 600	8 602	7 900	21 098
Subtotal		**677 600**	**51 337**	**105 331**	**520 932**
Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency					
Temporary assistance	30	420 000	0	0	420 000
Consultants	40	60 000	15 588	17 000	27 412
Travel of staff	242	30 000	0	0	30 000
Subtotal		**510 000**	**15 588**	**17 000**	**477 412**
Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries					
Temporary assistance	30	100 000	3 030	18 000	78 970
Consultants	40	500 000	11 002	7 500	481 498
Expert groups	60	100 000		54 000	46 000
Travel of staff	242	0	28 026	7 500	(35 526)
Subtotal		**700 000**	**42 058**	**87 000**	**570 942**
Total		**4 356 600**	**449 513**	**808 918**	**3 098 170**
Section 21		1 170 000	961 849		208 151
Grand total		**5 526 600**	**1 411 362**	**808 918**	**3 306 321**

IV.34. The Advisory Committee notes from table 11A.2 that a reduction of $238,300 has been shown under posts; as indicated in paragraph 11A.5 (c) this is due to the delayed impact of the abolition of two D-1 posts in 1999. The Committee notes the increase of $334,700 shown against other staff costs. As indicated in paragraph 11A.16, $125,200 relates to general temporary assistance and overtime requested for the preparation and servicing of regional briefing workshops in preparation for the tenth session of UNCTAD; an amount of $226,300 has also been indicated in paragraph 11A.75 for general temporary assistance. The Committee was informed that this latter amount related to the cost of one P-5 and one General Service post to be deployed on a temporary basis to provide support and assistance in the preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

IV.35. As indicated in table 11A.2, expenditure under grants and contributions shows an increase of $254,000. As indicated in paragraph 11A.39, estimated requirements of $2,076,200, including the increase of $254,400, have been requested to provide for the UNCTAD share of mainframe and related computing services, with the increase relating, in particular, to the Lotus Notes implementation project, facilities and system management.

IV.36. With regard to policy-making organs, an amount of $818,300, before recosting, has been indicated in tables 11A.4 and 11A.5. However, this amount excludes resources for other conferences, such as the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed

Countries and the Fourth United Nations Conference to Review all Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices.

IV.37. Further, although the servicing of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries has been referred to in the narratives of five subprogrammes, in paragraphs 11A.34, 11A.44, 11A.55, 11A.63 and 11A.73, the specific outputs for the Conference have not been described. The Advisory Committee recommends that, in the future, the secretariat of UNCTAD should indicate under each subprogramme the specific service or output that would be delivered for a Conference that is serviced by more than one organizational unit, as well as the related estimated costs. This procedure would promote transparency and accountability and avoid potential duplication.

IV.38. The Advisory Committee notes from table 11A.3 that no changes in the total number of posts funded either from regular budget or extrabudgetary resources have been envisaged during 2000–2001. However, six posts at the Professional level and two General Service posts have been proposed for redeployment. While the Committee agrees to the redeployment of a P-4 post from subprogramme 2 to subprogramme 5, it does not agree to the redeployment of a P-2 post from subprogramme 5 to subprogramme 1. The Committee notes that two temporary posts have been proposed for subprogramme 5 for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (para. 11A.75). The Committee is also aware that other divisions of the UNCTAD secretariat perform many functions related to the activities and programmes for least developed countries. However, the Committee is not convinced that the capacity of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries to coordinate the activities and programmes of least developed, landlocked and small island countries has been addressed satisfactorily.

IV.39. The Advisory Committee is of the view that a careful analysis of the workload arising from paragraphs 11A.69, 11A.73 and 11A.76 of the proposed programme budget would lead to the conclusion that the resources proposed under subprogramme 5 are unrealistic. On enquiry, the Committee was informed that the P-4 post referred to in paragraph IV.28 of the Committee's report[1] had now been included under subprogramme 4. The Committee requested information on the functions of the post and follow-up to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. However, the Committee did not receive information that would allow it to determine whether the post should have been transferred. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General of UNCTAD review the workload of the Office of the Special Coordinator and, without prejudice to the decisions of the UNCTAD legislative bodies on the role of the Office, determine whether additional staff and non-staff resources should be provided to the Office of the Special Coordinator after the next special session on small island developing States.

IV.40. With regard to the proposed redeployment of a General Service (Principal level) post mentioned in paragraph 11A.26, the Advisory Committee notes that table 11A.7 reflects that there is already one General Service post at the Principal level in the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. Furthermore, the explanation in paragraph 11A.26 does not fully justify a second post at the Principal level. The Committee also sought information on the functions assigned to the P-5 post proposed for transfer to subprogramme 2, as indicated in paragraph 11A.45, and was provided with only a vacancy announcement for the post. The Committee believes that the redeployments need further justification.

IV.41. The vacancy situation for UNCTAD continues to be high. The average vacancy rate for 1998 was 12.6 per cent and the situation as of April 1999 was 11.5 per cent for Professional posts. For General Service posts, 7.2 per cent was the average for 1998 and as of April 1999 it was 4.8 per cent. The Advisory Committee is aware that the persistent vacancy situation in United Nations offices and departments has often led some programme managers to resort to employing short-term staff and consultants in order to implement work programmes. The Committee recalls its comments in paragraph IV.31 of its report,[1] that provisions for consultants and ad hoc expert groups had been requested in order to ensure the full implementation of the programme of work of UNCTAD in view of the reduced number of posts that had been proposed for the biennium 1998–1999.

IV.42. The Advisory Committee requested information on the number of personnel in UNCTAD who were in charge of recruitment of staff and consultants and ad hoc expert groups for UNCTAD and whether this function was also performed by the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Committee was provided with the following table (see para. 11A.80 of the proposed programme budget). The table below shows which staff are involved in the administrative process of recruitment by source of funding in UNCTAD and the United Nations Office at Geneva. The United Nations Office at Geneva does not recruit consultants and experts under the 200 series of the Staff Rules.

	Special service agreement	*100 series*	*200 series*	*300 series*
Chief of Unit				
P-4	x	x	x	x
P-3	x		x	
G-7	x		x	
G-6		x		x
G-5		x		
G-4	x		x	
G-4	x		x	
Performed by the United Nations Office at Geneva	No	Yes	No	General service only

IV.43. The Advisory Committee notes from table 11A.2 that an amount of $1,750,400, before recosting, has been requested for travel. The Committee understands that included in the amount of $113,500, referred to in paragraph 11A.17, is an amount of $66,800 for the travel of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his party to the tenth session of UNCTAD. The Committee believes that the costs of the Secretary-General's travel should have been included in the amount requested for his travel in section 1 of the proposed programme budget.

IV.44. As indicated in table 11A.2 (2) an amount of $5,292,700 has been projected under extrabudgetary resources for travel. Furthermore, amounts requested for consultants and experts include travel. The travel funds at the disposal of UNCTAD are therefore considerably more than the $1,750,400 shown under the regular budget. The Advisory Committee points out that it is not always easy to delineate clearly the object of expenditure to which travel obligations might be charged, particularly when dealing with activities that are funded both from the regular budget and from extrabudgetary sources.

IV.45. In this connection, the Advisory Committee noted from statement IX of the interim financial statements for the period ending 31 December 1998 that under staff and other personnel costs for technical cooperation, $12.2 million has been recorded as expenditure in 1998. It was not possible for the Committee to obtain information on how much of the

$12.2 million relates to travel of experts and consultants delivering technical cooperation services, since the current accounting systems are not designed to make this distinction clear.

IV.46. The Advisory Committee acknowledges that UNCTAD services are directed in the main to developing countries and that the cost of travel in the areas of its operations can be quite high. Nevertheless, the Committee trusts that as UNCTAD operations become increasingly affected by new technology, such as videoconferencing, remote translation, electronic transfer of information through e-mail and other automated facilities, the rate of growth in travel expenditure should decrease (see chap. I above).

IV.47. As indicated in table 11A.2(1), an amount of $2,366,200, before recosting, has been requested for consultants and experts, showing an increase of $22,400 over the previous biennium. In addition, as indicated in table 11A.2(2), an amount of $22,038,400 in extrabudgetary resources has been estimated for the same purpose. The Advisory Committee enquired whether this requirement was for project implementation expertise and was informed that the proposed amount of $22,038,400, in its entirety, would provide for project implementation expertise; approximately 32 per cent of the amount shown for consultants and experts would provide for individual contractors and special service agreements, while the balance would provide for staff under the 200 series. The Committee believes that the presentation is somewhat misleading, since 68 per cent of the resources would provide for project personnel. In this connection, the Committee notes that under other sections of the proposed programme budget, for example sections 9, 12 and 13, where there are considerable resources for extrabudgetary activities, no such classification has been made. The categorization should be reviewed in the next budget estimates under this section.

IV.48. In paragraph IV.31 of its report,[1] the Advisory Committee had stated that there was a need to identify more clearly the work to be carried out by consultants, ad hoc expert groups and the staff of the UNCTAD secretariat. In table 11A.23 the UNCTAD secretariat states that it has identified "as clearly as possible the work to be carried out, taking into account the Advisory Committee's concern". However, the Committee notes that the request in paragraph 11A.36 for $543,000 is mainly for supplementing the services to be provided by staff under subprogramme 1. In paragraph 11A.46, contingency resources of $950,000 have been requested for studies yet to be determined under subprogramme 2. Under subprogramme 5, it is not clear to the Committee whether the studies will be carried out in full by the consultants or by the various divisions of the UNCTAD secretariat coordinated by the Office of Coordinator. Regardless of the units charged with the responsibility to prepare the studies, it is the view of the Committee that many of the tasks can be carried out by the secretariat staff.

IV.49. Under each subprogramme, resources have been requested for the direct cost of ad hoc expert groups. However, the Advisory Committee points out that the total cost of expert groups and related meetings is not fully disclosed in the estimates. For example, the direct cost indicated does not include the conference-servicing costs. Secondly, it is not always clear from the narratives whether the secretariat is requesting resources for meetings or for ad hoc expert groups which would hold an unspecified number of meetings. The Committee notes also that the number of meetings and/or expert groups has increased from the number estimated in 1998–1999. The reasons for the increase are not transparent. In order to enhance transparency, the Committee recommends that in future presentations the total number of ad hoc expert groups and the related number of meetings should be disclosed, preferably in tabular form under each subprogramme, covering two previous bienniums and those proposed for the next biennium. Information on the actual number of the groups convened and the number of meetings held should also be disclosed.

IV.50. Extrabudgetary funds, as indicated in table 11A.1(2), show an increase from $37,971,200 to $39,526,700. This is accounted for by an increase under technical cooperation trust funds and a slight increase of resources expected from UNDP.

IV.51. The Advisory Committee notes that the bulk of resources for the technical cooperation trust funds are allocated to subprogramme 4 ($16.7 million) and that subprogrammes 1 and 2 have $4.5 million each. An amount of $3.1 million is allocated to subprogramme 3, while subprogramme 5 has the least allocation, only $900,000. On enquiry, the Committee was informed that this allocation was based on the wishes of donors, and that each contribution was held in a different account. The overall figure for trust funds was accounted for in the audited financial statement and not by individual accounts.

IV.52. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 11A.80 (b) (ii) (a) that "recruitment and full-scale administration of technical cooperation experts and consultants for UNCTAD and other United Nations offices in Geneva" is done under programme support. In view of the large number of consultants and experts that UNCTAD uses for its programmes and activities, the Committee recommends that in the next budget estimates, information be provided on steps taken to comply with section VIII of General Assembly resolution 53/221. Furthermore, the Committee stresses the importance of ensuring that the UNCTAD secretariat has in place efficient procedures to obtain ad hoc experts, to procure consultant services, and to monitor and evaluate their performance and that of the related programmes and activities.

IV.53. With regard to advisory services and group training programmes, the Advisory Committee notes that under subprogrammes 1 to 4 a considerable volume of activities is implemented under the regular budget and extrabudgetary funding. The Committee enquired as to whether there was a systematic programme of evaluation of these activities and, if so, when the last evaluations were made. The Committee was informed that UNCTAD makes an annual evaluation of one of its technical cooperation programmes to be discussed by the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget — the subsidiary expert body on managerial and institutional matters of the Trade and Development Board — so as to "allow the Working Party to better evaluate the programme, recommend follow-up action and enhance UNCTAD's comparative advantage" (as decided by the Working Party at its twenty-fourth session). The evaluation examines the programme on such aspects as the current situation, the impact, the relevance and the comparative advantage, and makes recommendations as to the short-term corrective measures to be taken, if any, and future strategic directions. In addition, UNCTAD has established a systematic policy to conduct evaluations of technical cooperation programmes and individual projects "in agreement with both the beneficiary country/ies and the donor/s" so as to "examine the impact of activities against their objectives and will propose practical recommendations to deal with deficiencies".[13] In evaluating its technical cooperation programmes, UNCTAD has recently introduced and been experimenting with a participatory approach, whereby the evaluation team is composed of a professional evaluator(s) and representatives from beneficiary countries and donors, participating in their personal capacity.

IV.54. With regard to information technology, the Advisory Committee requested additional information on the Lotus Notes project referred to in paragraph 11A.39 of the proposed programme budget, as well as other new information technology projects under implementation in 1998–1999 or to be implemented during the biennium 2000–2001 and the related full cost of these projects from inception to completion, regardless of the number of years it would take to implement the project. For example, the Committee was informed that the Lotus project would take 3 to 4 years. The Committee notes that it is not clear from paragraph 11A.80 (c), how many of the tasks mentioned there are maintenance and support

of existing systems and how many represent new investment. The Committee requested further clarification and was provided with the table below.

Implementation of the Lotus Notes project
(United States dollars)

Project elements	*Hardware*	*Software*	*UNCTAD* regular budget (person-months)*	*UNCTAD temporary assistance*	*ICC*	*Lotus experience*
Feasibility study			4.00	–	4 000	23 000
Planning		1 500	1.50	–	4 000	10 500
Information technology infrastructure (Year 2000-related)						
Workstations	475 000	145 000	2.00	45 000	–	–
Network	50 000	–	0.00	–	–	–
Communications	50 000		0.50		2 500	–
Lotus infrastructure	30 000	55 000	9.00		23 400	171 500
Technical training			1.80			35 000
Mail migration	–	–	7.30	–	4 750	227 500
Subtotal	**605 000**	**201 500**	**26.10**	**45 000**	**38 650**	**467 500**
Documents management	15 000	10 000	12.60	–	50 000	300 000
Administrative processes	–	–	26.80	–	120 000	560 000
Grand total	**620 000**	**211 500**	**65.50**	**45 000**	**208 650**	**1 327 500**

* Excludes regular support cost.

IV.55. In view of the central role that new technology plays in the operations of UNCTAD, the Advisory Committee recommends that in the next proposed programme budget the UNCTAD secretariat indicate much more clearly technology projects under way and planned for the coming biennium, with the full cost of the projects to their completion. Information should also be provided indicating the extent to which new technology is used in UNCTAD conference services and activities, including the dissemination of the large number of publications and reports produced by UNCTAD. Electronic dissemination of publications, reports and other material should be subject to the observations of the Committee, as indicated in chapter I above. In this connection, the Committee welcomes the increasing use of remote translation in UNCTAD and recommends further expansion of this service to the maximum extent possible. The Committee was informed that remote translation would be used extensively for the tenth session of UNCTAD, to be held in Bangkok in 2000.

IV.56. With regard to the question of publications, the Advisory Committee welcomes the information contained in table 11A.23 in response to the Committee's observations in paragraphs IV.33 and IV.34 of its report.[1] However, the effect of the intergovernmental reviews of publications is not very apparent from the estimates. The Committee recommends that, in future, information be provided, preferably in tabular form, in the estimates on non-recurrent and recurrent publications for UNCTAD, covering two bienniums and proposed for the next biennium. Information should be included indicating the number of publications actually produced as against the number estimated. The Committee was provided with additional information as follows:

Information on publications

The table below provides statistics on the number of publications in the bienniums 1998–1999 and 2000–2001. The decrease under recurrent publications in most cases is explained by a reduction in the number of issues and by consolidation, notably in subprogramme 1. For example, the number of the Discussion Paper Series was reduced from 40 in the current biennium to 30 in 2000–2001; similarly, the number of issues of the *Journal of Green Gas Emissions* was reduced from 12 to 8 (and it was reclassified as non-current publication). However, no major recurrent publication is proposed for abolition. The rationalization of the programme was made through an extensive subprogramme-by-subprogramme review by the newly established UNCTAD Publication Committee in autumn of 1998.

	Recurrent publications	*Non-recurrent publications*	*Total*
Programme budget for 1998–1999			
Subprogramme 1	91	21	112
Subprogramme 2	23	44	67
Subprogramme 3	37	12	49
Subprogramme 4	16	13	29
Subprogramme 5	2	8	10
Total	**169**	**98**	**267**
Proposed programme budget for 2000–2001			
Subprogramme 1	26	62	88
Subprogramme 2	23	38	61
Subprogramme 3	32	19	51
Subprogramme 4	16	10	26
Subprogramme 5	2	4	6
Total	**99**	**133**	**232**

IV.57. The Advisory Committee received the comments of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget. The Committee has taken into account the views of the Working Party in the recommendations made above. In this connection, the Committee recalls its views on the matter as indicated in its report (A/53/7). UNCTAD representatives had indicated a strong wish by Member States, and in particular the members of the Working Party, to increase their participation and involvement in the programme planning and budget preparation of UNCTAD. The Committee pointed out that, although the Working Party reports to the Trade and Development Board, the final responsibility for determining the budget, as is the case with other intergovernmental bodies of the Organization, rests with the General Assembly, which considers proposals of the Secretary-General after they have been reviewed by the Committee.

IV.58. The Advisory Committee requested information on the latest position regarding the state of recovery of funds defrauded from the Organization and the measures taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/53/811), including the recommendations by the Office and the initiatives by the UNCTAD management.

Section 11B
International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO

IV.59. The General Assembly, in its decision 53/411 B of 18 December 1998, endorsed the revised administrative arrangements for ITC as set out in paragraph 11 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/53/7/Add.3). Subsequently, the Secretary-General submitted a report on the outline of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 for ITC (A/54/127). The outline reflected total resources of 59,204,600 Swiss Francs, with income indicated at SwF 810,000 or SwF 405,000 per annum, and the United Nations share of the costs at SwF 29,197,300 for the biennium.

IV.60. In its report (A/53/7/Add.15), the Advisory Committee had recommended General Assembly approval of the amount of SwF 59,204,600 for the outline for the biennium 2000–2001. However, the Committee also pointed out that the procedure which had been followed had not been in conformity with the recommendations of the Committee as outlined in its report (A/53/7/Add.3) and that the fascicle for section 11B of the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 was not based on the outline and in fact had preceded it.

IV.61. As indicated in paragraph 11B.6 of the fascicle, on the basis of the decision taken by the General Assembly on the outline, a detailed fascicle of the ITC proposed programme budget will be prepared and submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. In the meantime, as indicated in table 11B.1 of the "provisional" fascicle, an amount of $19,812,700 (before recosting), has been proposed as the United Nations share for ITC for the biennium 2000–2001.

Section 12
Environment

IV.62. As indicated in paragraph 12.10 of the proposed programme budget, regular budget resources proposed under this section amount to $8,713,900 before recosting. Table 12.1 shows a decrease of $42,700; the reasons for the increase/decrease are explained in paragraph 12.10.

IV.63. Extrabudgetary resources have been projected at $182,709,400, as indicated in table 12.1(2); total resources for this section amount to $192,172,800 at 2000–2001 rates. The extrabudgetary resources projected represent 95.07 per cent of the total resources available for section 12. The Advisory Committee enquired as to the reasons for the absence in the estimates of the more than $300 million of convention secretariat funds, which were shown in the UNEP programme budget but are not shown in the fascicle. The Committee was informed that, although UNEP administers these resources, the determination of the use and level is made by the various governing bodies of each of the conventions and therefore this was not reflected in the proposed programme budget of the United Nations.

IV.64. With regard to posts, the total number of posts funded from regular budget remains at 39, while posts funded by extrabudgetary resources show an increase of 66 from a total of 425 in the biennium 1998–1999 to 491 for 2000–2001. With regard to the vacancy situation, the Committee was informed that during 1998 the average vacancy rate for posts in the Professional category was 8.6 per cent; from the information provided to the Committee, as of 30 April 1999 there was one vacancy in the Professional category.

IV.65. The Advisory Committee notes the recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Board of Auditors and the action taken to implement the recommendations (see table 12.11). The summary of implementation, as indicated in the overview paragraphs 12.1 to 12.9, provides information on the extensive reform and restructuring that is taking place in UNEP under the guidance of the Governing Council of the Programme. The estimates and the programme structure reflect the effect of the restructuring that is taking place in UNEP. As summarized in paragraph 12.7, the programme will now comprise seven subprogrammes and the United Nations Office at Nairobi will henceforth be responsible for the functions of budget administration, staffing control, implementation of audit recommendations and provision of administrative support to the programme and to the secretariats of the environmental conventions associated with UNEP.

IV.66. As indicated in paragraph 12.33, "the Governing Council approved the proposals of the Executive Director regarding the restructuring of the Programme and the Secretariat along functional lines". The subprogrammes approved by the Governing Council are set out in paragraphs 12.42 to 12.61 of the estimates.

IV.67. As at the time of the Advisory Committee's consideration of the proposed programme budget, further discussions on reform measures and proposals for environment and human settlements, as outlined in the report A/53/463 of the Secretary-General, were under way in the General Assembly. The Committee enquired as to the outcome of those discussions and was informed that the General Assembly had adopted a resolution on the subject on 28 July 1999 (resolution 53/242).

IV.68. The Advisory Committee notes that the subprogrammes described in paragraphs 12.42 to 12.61 are not presented with resources. The subprogrammes of Habitat, on the other hand, are presented with such information. In this connection, the Committee points out that the subprogrammes of the UNEP programme budget submitted to the Governing Council and reviewed by the Committee are presented with resources. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that a review be made so that a uniform presentation can be adopted. The Committee does not expect more than the seven additional resource tables, one for each subprogramme. Expansion of the narratives would be marginally affected by limited explanation of the relatively small resources under the regular budget. The bulk of the resources, in each subprogramme, is under extrabudgetary funding and detailed justification is submitted separately to the Governing Council by the Executive Director. The Committee also recommends that the cost of services performed by the United Nations Office at Nairobi be revealed in a footnote to table 12.2.

IV.69. The reduction of $1,955,400 under executive direction and management (table 12.5) is offset by an increase of approximately the same amount under the programme of work (table 12.9). This change reflects the decision to transfer the functions of regional representation from executive direction and management to the programme of work as part of the programme reorganization approved by the Governing Council.

IV.70. For its part, the Advisory Committee has considered the programme budget of UNEP and submitted its recommendations to the Governing Council. The Committee recommends that the Executive Director continue the process of restructuring the format of the UNEP programme budget to bring it into line with the harmonized budget model of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, using for illustrative purposes the actual figures that the Governing Council will approve for the biennium 2000–2001. The budget mock-up should be presented to the Committee in October 1999. The recommendations of the Committee on the mock-up and subsequent decisions by the Governing Council during its February 2000 session would govern the preparation of the next biennial budget for 2002–2003, which would be before the Committee in November/December 2000.

IV.71. With regard to the Mecure project, the Advisory Committee notes the information contained in table 12.11. The Committee requested information on the latest situation concerning the Mecure project and was informed that the system, which had been funded entirely from extrabudgetary resources, had become fully operational in April 1998. The Committee intends to follow up on this issue in the context of its examination of the budget of UNEP during the Committee's fall 1999 session, as indicated in the report of the Committee (A/53/513).

IV.72. In view of the comments in table 12.11 on the appointment and promotion machinery at Nairobi, the Advisory Committee recommends that urgent steps be taken to review what appears to be a very cumbersome, duplicative and costly appointment and promotion process in Nairobi.

IV.73. As indicated in table 12.1 of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $1,281,800, before recosting, is requested for policy-making organs. The Advisory Committee was informed that that amount is sub-allotted to the United Nations Office at Nairobi and is managed on a charge-back basis. The comments of the Committee on the charge-back process are contained in section 27G below. The Committee also recommends that steps be taken to determine more accurately the level of services that the United Nations Office at Nairobi is required to provide to the organizations at Nairobi and the rates of reimbursing the cost of these services.

Section 13
Human settlements

IV.74. As indicated in table 13.1 of the proposed programme budget, regular budget resources proposed under this section amount to $13,290,100 before recosting, an increase of $701,400; the reasons for the increase relate to the preparation activities of the special session of the General Assembly (Istanbul + 5) and additional requirement of temporary assistance, as explained in paragraph 13.6 of the proposed programme budget.

IV.75. Extrabudgetary resources have been projected at $89,704,900, as indicated in table 13.1(2); total resources for this section amount to $104,338,200 at 2000–2001 rates. Extrabudgetary resources projected represent 86 per cent of the total resources available for the Habitat programme.

IV.76. The total number of posts funded from regular budget resources remains at 66, while posts funded by extrabudgetary resources show a decrease of 54 from a total of 156 during the biennium 1998–1999 to 102 for 2000–2001. On enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that there were no vacancies for staff in either the Professional or General Service category as of 30 April 1999.

IV.77. The Advisory Committee notes that a comprehensive process of reform and restructuring is taking place in Habitat. The revitalization of Habitat has been the subject of extensive discussions and review, as reflected in the report of the Executive Director submitted to the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventeenth session.[14] The Committee enquired about the outcome of the session held from 5 to 14 May 1999 and was informed that several resolutions and decisions were adopted by the Commission, including resolutions 17/14 and 17/15. The Committee notes that the proposed restructuring of the Centre and its programme have been endorsed by the Commission.

IV.78. Some of the effects of the reform and the restructuring of Habitat are explained in paragraphs 13.1 to 13.3 and 13.22 of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee notes that the new programme structure comprises executive direction and management and two subprogrammes, one on adequate shelter for all and the other on sustainable urban development. Programme support will be provided by the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The Committee recommends that in future the cost of services provided by the United Nations Office at Nairobi be revealed in a footnote to table 13.2.

IV.79. With respect to programme support, the Advisory Committee discussed this issue in connection with its review of the extrabudgetary programme of Habitat and submitted its recommendations to the Commission on Human Settlements. The Committee had called for a clear identification of programme support charges and had also recommended careful monitoring of administrative and management costs to ensure that more resources contributed to the Foundation are available for projects.

IV.80. As at the time of the Advisory Committee's consideration of the proposed programme budget, further discussions on reform measures and proposals for environment and human settlements as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/463) were under way in the General Assembly. The Committee enquired as to the outcome of those discussions and was informed that the General Assembly had adopted a resolution on the subject on 28 July 1999 (resolution 53/242).

IV.81. The Advisory Committee notes that actions taken on recommendations of external and internal oversight bodies and of the Committee are indicated in table 13.13. The Committee points out that actions taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations in the report of the Board of Auditors,[15] were communicated to the General Assembly in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/335/Add.1, sect. II.J). The comments of the Committee were submitted to the General Assembly in document A/53/513.

Section 14
Crime prevention and criminal justice

IV.82. The resources proposed under this section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 amount to $5,956,300 before recosting, reflecting an increase of 11.1 per cent, or $599,000 over the biennium 1998–1999. As indicated in paragraph 14.7 of the proposed programme budget, of the total amount proposed, $236,100 would be for non-recurrent requirements for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, to be held in Vienna in 2000, and $362,900 would be for strengthening the operational activities of the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention.

IV.83. As indicated in paragraph 14.8, extrabudgetary resources from the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund are projected at $4,128,900 and would provide for technical cooperation activities to supplement those implemented by two interregional advisers provided for under section 21, Regular programme of technical cooperation.

IV.84. The official responsible for managing the programme of work of the Centre is the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. Administrative costs/programme support for this section have been reflected under section 27F, Administration, Vienna.

IV.85. As indicated in table 14.3, posts funded by the regular budget total 24, an increase of one post at the P-4 level over the biennium 1998–1999. The need for the additional P-4 post is explained in paragraph 14.22 of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of the requested P-4 post. The Committee was informed that in 1998 the vacancy rate for staff in the Professional category was 16.7 per cent, the same as at 30 April 1999.

IV.86. With regard to posts funded from extrabudgetary resources, the Advisory Committee notes from the same table that the total of 16 posts reflected for the biennium 1998–1999 included three posts on non-reimbursable loan; these three posts have not been continued for the biennium 2000–2001.

Section 15
International drug control

IV.87. The resources proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 under this section of the programme budget amount to $17,023,100 before recosting, reflecting an increase of 15.5 per cent or $2,294,700 over the appropriation for 1998–1999.

IV.88. As indicated in table 15.1(2) of the proposed programme budget, extrabudgetary resources are projected at $213,416,400 for the biennium 2000–2001 and represent 93 per cent of the total resources available to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

IV.89. As indicated in paragraph 15.14, the increase is due in part ($600,900) to the establishment of three new posts, two at the P-4 level and one P-3 post. Thus, the total number of posts proposed to be funded from regular budget resources during the biennium 2000–2001 would be 71, as reflected in table 15.3. The Advisory Committee was informed that the vacancy rate for posts in the Professional category during 1998 was 8.1 per cent, and as of 30 April 1999, the rate was 11.4 per cent.

IV.90. As indicated in paragraph 15.37, a post at the P-3 level has been requested for the publication of the *World Drug Report* to enhance the Programme's catalytic functions; as indicated in paragraph 15.50, a P-4 post has been requested to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation capabilities of the International Narcotics Control Board; and as indicated in paragraph 15.69, an additional P-4 post has been requested for subprogramme 4 to enhance the Programme's ability to reach specific targets under the Action Plan adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session. The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of these requests.

Part V
Regional cooperation for development

V.1. The Secretary-General's estimate for part V of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–20001 amounts to $381,195,500, and comprises a total of $83,519,300 for sections 16A, Regional Commission (Economic Commission for Africa), and section 16B, Regional Commissions New York Office; $64,472,600 for section 17, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific; $44,290,600 for section 18, Economic development in Europe; $90,757,700 for section 19, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean; $53,011,400 for section 20, Economic and social development in Western Asia; and $45,138,900 for section 21, Regular programme of technical cooperation.

V.2. During its consideration of the budget proposals for the regional commissions, the Advisory Committee observed a number of elements common in the budget submissions for Part V.

V.3. The Advisory Committee welcomes the changes made to standardize the format of the presentation in response to its recommendation contained in paragraph V.4 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] thus harmonizing the format of presentation of the programme of activities of the regional commissions. The Committee notes that the narrative on executive direction now includes activities and resources related to the office of the Executive Secretary, the Secretary of the Commission and the unit dealing with information services. The narrative on programme support, includes those related to administrative and common services (programme planning, budget and finance, human resources management and general services); conference and library services, and management of technical cooperation. The format related to policy-making organs and programme of work was not modified, as it had been previously harmonized, as indicated by the Secretary-General.

V.4. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that there is still room to further standardize the presentation. The narratives under each subprogramme could be further improved to ensure they are more in line with a pragmatic and achievable programme for the proposed biennium. The Committee believes that the link between mandates and outputs could be established more clearly in the narrative, better drawing the connection with the priorities in the medium-term plan. Moreover, the Committee is not convinced of the usefulness of the description provided under "international cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison". This issue should be reviewed in the context of the next budget submission. The Committee is of the opinion that the role of cooperation as input into the delivery process could be clearer to Member States if it were linked to specific programme activities.

V.5. The Advisory Committee also recommends that the commissions start compiling workload indicators for each of the substantive subprogrammes they undertake for presentation, in the context of the next proposed programme budget, in comparative form with the previous two bienniums. For support activities, the Committee is of the opinion that the format followed at Headquarters should be examined, with a view to identifying procedures and techniques that could be employed by the regional commissions in a harmonized way.

V.6. A common characteristic among all programmes under part V for the biennium 2000–2001 is the redeployment of resources among subprogrammes. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that such cases require greater transparency in the way the information is provided, and that the reasons for variances must be clearly explained. A supplementary presentation in tabular form, illustrating such redeployment of resources, would facilitate the analysis.

V.7. In paragraph V.6 of its previous report,[1] the Advisory Committee recommended that budget submissions should indicate the extent of review by intergovernmental organs of the programmes of work and their various organizational and institutional issues, including intergovernmental structures. The Committee welcomes the information provided for each of the regional commissions in this regard. The Committee notes, however, that in several cases, such as ESCAP and ESCWA, the draft programme of work was reviewed before submission of the proposed budget, being subject to another review on a post facto basis. The Committee is of the opinion that the experience of other regional commissions should be sought with a view to addressing any problems regarding synchronization of the intergovernmental meetings with the planning and budgetary cycle of the United Nations (see chap. I above).

V.8. The Advisory Committee noted the high vacancy rates in the regional commissions, particularly at the Professional level — in ECA, an average of 24 per cent for 1998 and 22 per cent as of 31 May 1999; in ESCWA, an average of 26.2 per cent during 1998 and 22.3 per cent as of 17 June 1999; in ESCAP, an average of 15 per cent for 1998 and 10.5 per cent as of 30 April 1999; in ECE, an average of 12.3 per cent for 1998, reduced to 2.6 per cent as of 30 April 1999; and in ECLAC, an average of 10.6 per cent for 1998 and 5.5 per cent as of 30 April 1999. The Committee was informed by ESCAP, for example, that one of the challenges faced, was that it would sometimes lose staff members to other duty stations. In its report (A/53/7), the Committee indicated that "ECE pointed out the need to further decentralize decisions regarding appointments (particularly those at the P-2 and P-3 level)". The Committee was informed, however, that the situation had not changed. As indicated by the Committee in the context of its consideration of section 27C, procedures to effect transfer of staff between units of organization, reclassify posts and manage vacancies are excessively cumbersome and time-consuming (see part VIII below).

V.9. The Advisory Committee notes that, in some cases, certain measures have been taken to address the high vacancy situation in the regional commissions. As indicated in paragraph V.20 below, ECA was provided assistance by the Office of Human Resources Management, which sent a staff member to help the Commission in the process. In addition, the regional commission was provided with a list of candidates that had passed the competitive examination at the entry level for its input in the matter, in order to accelerate the recruitment process. ECLAC was granted authority for a period of six months, ending in September 1999, to advertise externally its vacancies at the P-4 and P-3 levels. The Committee is aware, however, that interim measures in most regional commissions include the increased use of consultants and experts in programme implementation.

V.10. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the long delays in recruitment, reclassification, placement and transfers between units in the United Nations system create serious shortcomings in the ability of those units to properly deliver their outputs. The Committee recommends that steps be taken by the Office of Human Resources Management to address the concerns of the regional commissions, ensuring they are accorded priority, when reviewing likely candidates for transfer to offices away from Headquarters, thus speeding the filling of existing vacancies and enhancing the ability of the regional commissions to implement programmes. In this connection, the Committee recalls the need to enforce, where necessary, contractual obligations of the staff regarding assignments to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations.

V.11. The Advisory Committee notes that, in accordance with the policy directives of the General Assembly, efforts have been made towards gender mainstreaming in the programmes of work of the regional commissions to different degrees. While ECA and ECLAC have established a new subprogramme, ESCAP has reflected gender concerns in different sectors of the programme of work such as poverty alleviation, rural development, population, small business and entrepreneurship development, skills development and technology transfer. In ESCWA, it is reflected in the context of its subprogramme on improvement of the quality of life. While the Committee acknowledges that each commission decides on the basis of legislative guidelines from its policy-making organs, care should be taken to avoid duplication of activities for gender mainstreaming.

V.12. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, of the different levels of the IMIS releases installed and in use in the regional commissions. ESCAP has implemented Releases 1 and 2, and will install Release 3 in 2000; ESCWA has implemented Releases 1 and 2, Release 3 will be installed at the end of 1999 and Release 4 is due in 2000; Release 2 is currently operating in ECLAC, and implementation of Release 3 is envisaged for January 2000. In ECE and ECA, Release 1 is operating, while implementation of Release 2 is envisaged during 1999 and early 2000. The Committee notes that provisions to provide support subsequent to completion of installation is requested for each regional commission under other staff costs, with the exception of ECE, since resources for this purpose are requested under section 27E of the programme budget. The Committee was informed that the situation would be reviewed in the context of the next budget submission for the period after December 2001. The Committee is of the view that steps must be taken to ensure that IMIS, once installed, is adequately maintained in all regional commissions.

V.13. The Advisory Committee also noted the different treatment of maintenance costs for computers, helpline costs, hardware, software and local area network (LAN) maintenance for each regional commission. In this regard, the Committee was informed that the three service levels applied at Headquarters were not applied to regional commissions or offices away from Headquarters.

V.14. The Advisory Committee was informed that the commissions were in various stages of preparation with regard to making existing technology systems year 2000 compliant. The Committee recalls that this process is centrally coordinated. It is not clear to the Committee, however, what contingency plans are in place to address problems related to non-compliant external entities with which the Commissions interact. The Committee has requested a report from the Secretary-General on the scope of work carried out in this regard in the context of its report (A/53/513) (see chap. I above).

V.15. The high ratio of programme support to programme of work has been previously pointed out by the Advisory Committee with some caution. The Committee notes, however, that the components of programme support in the regional commissions include conference and library services and management of technical cooperation in addition to traditional support functions, such as budgeting, management and personnel administration. The Committee is of the view, therefore, that as more modern technology and innovations are applied to automate support activities, the number of posts associated with those services should stabilize, allowing more resources to be released to substantive activities.

V.16. For example, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the degree to which remote translation can be employed should be further explored within the regional commissions. Not much reference is made to it in the budget estimates, and responses varied to queries made by the Committee with regard to each commission. The Committee notes that the regional commissions produce a large number of materials which require translation and that translation capacity among the various duty stations could be shared through the use of remote translation. The Committee recommends that the commissions further explore the use of remote translation, thus reducing related costs. Moreover, the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services should provide leadership and advise with regard to the better use of innovative technology in the area of conference services.

Section 16
Economic and social development in Africa

Section 16A
Regional Commission

V.17. As shown in table 16A.1 of the proposed programme budget, the regular budget estimate for section 16A for the biennium 2000–2001 amounts to $79,647,900 before recosting, showing an increase of $225,200 over the 1998–1999 appropriations. The extrabudgetary resources of ECA for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $16,359,400, compared with the 1998–1999 estimates of $15,840,600. The Advisory Committee further notes, within this category, that there is a decrease in funding from funds and programmes. However, funding from bilateral sources is projected to increase; the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that this was the result of active fund-raising.

V.18. As indicated in paragraph 16A.12 of the proposed programme budget, the increase in regular budget resources represents the combined effect of the proposed establishment of three P-4 and two P-3 posts under two new subprogrammes 6 and 7, the establishment of three Local level posts through conversion from general temporary assistance, the reclassification of one P-3 post to the P-4 level; as well as increases and decreases under various non-post objects of expenditure.

V.19. The proposed staffing table provides for 564 regular budget posts for 2000–2001, 218 in the Professional category and above, 343 Local level and 3 Field Service posts —

an increase of 5 Professional and 3 Local level posts over the 1998–1999 resources. The total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 is 60, compared to 70 posts for the biennium 1998–1999.

V.20. As indicated above, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as of 31 May 1999, the vacancy rate in the Professional category was 22 per cent. All General Service posts were encumbered. The Committee was informed, however, that ECA and the Office of Human Resources Management had taken measures to speed up recruitment, with the aim of reducing the vacancy rate to 5 per cent by the end of 1999. Steps taken included the Office of Human Resources Management sending a staff member to ECA to assist in the process and providing ECA with a list of candidates that had passed the competitive examination at the entry level for its input in the matter.

V.21. As can be seen from the table contained in paragraph 16A.14, the Secretary-General estimates that of the total resources proposed under section 16A, 56 per cent of regular budget resources and 73.2 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be spent on activities related to the programme of work; 39.7 per cent of regular budget resources and 24.9 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be required for programme support; and 3.6 per cent of regular budget resources and 1.9 per cent of extra budgetary resources would be allocated to executive direction and management, with 0.7 per cent of regular budget resources for policy-making organs.

V.22. The Advisory Committee notes that the estimates for 2000–2001 are presented in the context of the restructuring and programme reforms indicated in the last report of the Committee.[1] The main objective of these reforms being, as indicated in paragraph 16A.5 of the proposed programme budget, to seek to make a significant contribution to the realization of Africa's development priorities, in partnership with other institutions. The Committee commends the Commission for the clarity of the description of the factors taken into account during the preparation of the work programme and the related estimates, as set out in paragraphs 16A.2 to 16A.11, and for the presentation of the estimates and corresponding narrative, which show a marked improvement over the presentation for the previous biennium. The Committee points out that the congruence of subprogrammes with organizational units should enhance programme implementation, minimize duplication and promote accountability of programme managers.

V.23. The Committee notes that the programme structure of ECA has been changed, as a consequence of the revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001, to include two new subprogrammes: Promoting the advancement of women (subprogramme 6) and Supporting subregional activities for development (subprogramme 7). This brings the total number of subprogrammes to seven. Subprogramme 6 will be implemented by the African Centre for Women, with the view to mainstreaming gender issues into the policies, programmes and structures of member States and to promoting the empowerment of women so that they play a more effective and significant role in political, social and economic life. The Committee notes that a subprogramme entitled Women in development, already existed in the context of the 1996–1997 programme budget. Its activities were incorporated into other subprogrammes for 1998–1999, and they are now being given priority and focus as an autonomous subprogramme again.

V.24. The new subprogramme 7, Supporting subregional activities for development, will be implemented by five subregional development centres with their own intergovernmental machinery, and by a coordinating unit established under direct supervision of the Deputy Executive Secretary at the headquarters of the Commission. The Advisory Committee reiterates its past recommendation to the effect that all efforts must be made to ensure clear delineation of responsibility between the development centres and the ECA secretariat in order to avoid duplication of functions.

V.25. As can be seen from table 16A.8, there has been considerable redeployment of staff and other resources between subprogrammes. Moreover, the new subprogramme 7 is allocated 34.8 per cent of the resources corresponding to the programme of work, as indicated in paragraph 16A.43. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that no extrabudgetary resources were indicated therein because of the fact that, as a new subprogramme, none had been identified at the time of the preparation of the budget.

V.26. The structure of policy-making organs of ECA, along with their functions and pattern of meetings is described in paragraphs 16A.16 to 16A.29. As reported by the Committee in paragraph V.23 of its previous report,[1] the structure was established by the Conference of African Ministers at its thirty-second session, held in May 1997. The Committee points out one change, however, indicated in paragraph 16A.29 of the proposed budget: the abolition, in 1999, of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications at the end of the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. As indicated therein, the regional forum for those issues thereafter will be the African Economic Community's Committee on Transport, Communications and Tourism.

V.27. The Advisory Committee was informed that the Conference of Ministers had reviewed the programme of work for ECA in May 1999, endorsing the work programme and priorities as proposed by the Executive Secretary.

V.28. Table 16A.24 indicates an estimated amount of $31,587,700 (before recosting) under programme support, a reduction of $1,602,100 from 1998–1999. The bulk of the reduction ($1,158,900) is under general operating expenses. The Advisory Committee was informed that this decrease resulted from the decommissioning of the old computer system, which will provide savings in maintenance, reduced expenditures under utilities for the Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, as well as a decrease in the related insurance premium.

V.29. Paragraph 16A.10 of the proposed programme budget describes the emphasis placed by ECA on technology modernization. The Advisory Committee notes in particular that ECA "still lags behind many parts of the United Nations in the depth and scope of automation, in general, and in information technology, in particular". The programme seeks to upgrade the Commission's information technology capacity and to make use of that technology to disseminate its work. In view of the central role that technological modernization has in the efficient implementation of programmes and in promoting productivity and savings, the estimates should have been more informative about the strategy to address the problems identified in paragraph 16A.10.

V.30. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that a study had been commissioned by ECA to determine its optimum needs in automation. The proposed plan would improve connectivity between ECA headquarters and the five subregional development centres, and between ECA and the rest of the United Nations system, provide multimedia and data communications services to the Conference Centre and the African Regional Centre for Technology, and provide ECA with the capacity to distribute information quickly and effectively using modern electronic communications methods. The cost would amount to a total of $5,336,400 in a three-to-four-year span. The Committee was further informed that an amount of $225,000 had been allocated for this purpose during 1998–1999, and a provision for $974,400 was included in the proposed budget for 2000–2001 under contractual services, general operating expenses, and furniture and equipment.

V.31. The Advisory Committee notes that the remaining requirement within the original $5,336,400 million amounts to $4,137,000. The Committee was further informed that, of this amount, $2.36 million would be allocated to equipping ECA (headquarters and subregional development centres) with adequate information technology and telecommunications capabilities, $1.03 million to equipping the Conference Centre and African Regional Centre for Technology with multimedia and communications capabilities, and $750,000 to enhance communication, outreach and dissemination capacity via electronic and Internet means.

V.32. The Advisory Committee was further informed that a few technical issues remained to be settled before commencing installation of a VSAT unit before the end of 1999, which should improve considerably the capacity of the Commission for telecommunication services with the rest of the United Nations duty stations.

V.33. The Advisory Committee requested additional information on the use of the Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. The Committee was informed that the total cost for running the Centre was estimated at $3,188,700 for the biennium 2000–2001 on the basis of experience. Resources provide for one Professional and eight Local-level staff, as well as two engineering posts. Income from other users was estimated at $801,000. The Committee further notes that under income section 2, table IS2.3, an amount of $1.4 million is indicated for ECA in relation to rental of premises. The Committee was also informed of the need to set up a marketing strategy for the Centre, which would require a study for which there are no resources available at present. The Committee is of the opinion that the existence of a potential market and opportunities for success should be taken into account before committing resources for such strategy.

V.34. A large part of the requirements under other staff costs for ECA is under programme support — $1,820,400 out of a total of $2,643,800 (before recosting). Justification is provided in paragraph 16A.128. The Committee notes that the $237,300 increase over 1998–1999 relates to additional requirements for the recruitment of freelance interpreters and translators to service Commission meetings ($115,400); general temporary assistance for IMIS development ($93,400) and increased security coverage of the Centre ($28,500). The Committee notes that there is no team of interpreters at ECA and that the editorial service is not fully adequate. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that some remote translation had taken place, yet further expansion was currently hindered by the lack of efficient telecommunication facilities at present. The Committee trusts that the installation of the VSAT system will allow ECA to further explore remote translation possibilities.

Section 16B
Regional Commissions New York Office

V.35. Paragraphs 16B.1 and 16B.2 provide a description of the functions and outputs of the Regional Commissions New York Office. The Advisory Committee notes that, with the exception of a small decrease ($1,100) under posts and a small increase under general operating expenses ($5,900), the resource estimates for the Office are proposed at the maintenance level, providing for three posts in the Professional category and above and three General Service posts.

Section 17
Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

V.36. The Secretary-General's estimate for section 17 for the biennium 2000–2001, as reflected in table 17.1, amounts to $56,457,900 before recosting under the regular budget and $21,368,300 under extrabudgetary resources. The proposed requirements under the regular budget reflect a decrease of $218,000 (or 0.3 per cent) compared to the 1998–1999 programme budget. As can be seen from tables 17.1 and 17.2, the reduction is the net result of reduced requirements under posts ($896,100) and supplies and materials ($32,500), and increased requirements under other objects of expenditure ($710,600).

V.37. The Advisory Committee notes, as shown in table 17.1 (2) that the decline of $3,229,800 in extrabudgetary resources is mostly due to a decrease in UNDP and bilateral resources. The Committee was informed that although this type of funding supplements regular budget resources, the decrease has affected delivery of technical cooperation programmes. ESCAP is working on renegotiating and attracting additional funding.

V.38. As indicated in paragraph 17.13 (a) of the programme budget, the reduction under posts is due to the fact that the reduction of 24 posts proposed for the biennium 1998–1999 did not take full effect until January 1999, as indicated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph V.36 of its previous report.[1] Table 17.3 of the proposed budget shows that the total number of regular budget posts for the biennium 2000–2001 is 468. The only changes from the previous biennium being the reclassification of one P-4 post to P-5 to implement the post classification level for the Chief of the Editorial Section, and of one Field Service post to P-4 to supervise the Technical Services Unit (Electronic Services Section) and undertake functions required to implement the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services regarding security of the Commission's technological environment, as indicated in paragraph 17.12 of the proposed programme budget.

V.39. As also indicated in table 17.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts shows a decrease from 70 to 51. The Advisory Committee was informed, however, that the reduction in 19 posts corresponded to some of the 25 gratis personnel (type I) pointed out by the Committee in paragraph V.37 of its previous report.[1]

V.40. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as of 31 May 1999, the vacancy rates were 8.8 per cent in the Professional category and 6.1 per cent in the General Service. One of the challenges faced by the Commission, as indicated above, is that it sometimes loses staff members to other duty stations. The Advisory Committee recommends that steps be taken by the Office of Human Resources Management to ensure that this Commission and others facing the same problems are accorded priority when reviewing likely candidates for transfer to offices away from Headquarters (see para. V.10 above).

V.41. As can be seen from the table in paragraph 17.14, the Secretary-General estimates that of the total resources proposed under section 17, 45.7 per cent of regular budget resources and 66.2 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be spent on activities related to the programme of work; 48.4 per cent of regular budget resources and 33.6 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be allocated to programme support; and 4.2 per cent of regular budget resources and 0.2 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be required for executive direction and management, with 1.7 per cent of regular budget resources for policy-making organs.

V.42. Paragraphs 17.3 and 17.4 of the budget indicate that the resources proposed for ESCAP for 2000–2001 relate to a streamlined programme structure, reflecting a reduction in the number of subprogrammes from 10 to 7, and to efforts to rationalize the structure of ESCAP secretariat itself, in line with the revised programme structure. The Advisory

Committee was informed that the programme of work for 2000–2001 was first reviewed in January 1999, and then reviewed and adopted by the Commission at its fifty-fifth session in April 1999.

V.43. The Advisory Committee further notes that, in response to an assessment by Governments on regular budget resource allocations to the programme of work and subsequent mandates and priorities, via a questionnaire, the following four areas have been strengthened, in terms of regular budget staff and non-staff resources, as indicated in paragraph 17.5 of the proposed budget: statistics, tourism development, development research and policy analysis, and social policy and integration of disadvantaged groups and women in development.

V.44. Regular budget resources allocated to the programme of work amount to $25,820,200 before recosting. As a result of the designation of the four priority areas mentioned in paragraph V.43 above, and within the overall resource base proposed for the biennium 2000–2001, regular budget staff and non-staff costs have been reallocated to the related subprogramme areas. In this regard, as shown in table 17.7, increases of 5.4 per cent, 15.5 per cent, 2.7 per cent and 5.7 per cent are reflected in subprogramme 2, Development research and policy analysis; subprogramme 3, Social development; subprogramme 6, Transport, communications, tourism and infrastructure development; and subprogramme 7, Statistics, respectively. Post redeployments include increases of one P-3 and two Local level posts under subprogramme 2, two P-3 and two Local level posts under subprogramme 3 and one P-3 post under subprogramme 6, and an increase of one P-4 and a decrease of one Local level post under subprogramme 7.

V.45. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the use of technology in programme implementation should have been explained more clearly. Although resources are presented for each subprogramme, there is no indication on the role of new technology in programme implementation. The Committee recommends that, in future, information be included on new information technology for implementation of the programme of work, including proposals for new information systems.

V.46. An amount of $933,400 before recosting, is proposed for policy-making organs. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that there were 17 interpreter/translator posts in ESCAP.

V.47. Table 17.2 indicates an increase in travel of $4,900 before recosting. However, increase of travel resources is requested under a number of subprogrammes. The Advisory Committee points out that these increases are in effect a redeployment of resources. The Committee has no objection to these requests, but recommends, in future, that the proposals for increases or decreases, even under redeployment, be clearly explained in a general concise statement under each subprogramme.

V.48. The Advisory Committee welcomes the review of publications undertaken by the ESCAP secretariat and the Commission's intergovernmental machinery, through the establishment of a working group, in response to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as indicated in table 17.25 of the programme budget. The Committee notes that, as a result, the readership survey has been made mandatory, the Publications Committee has been reconstituted and a guide to ESCAP publication activities has been drafted to improve overall quality. The Committee was further informed that non-recurrent publications have been reduced from a high of 116 during 1997–1998 to 66 during 2000–2001, and recurrent publications from 194 to 167, respectively. The Committee encourages continuation of this activity and reiterates that the budget implications of reviews should be indicated in budget submissions.

V.49. The Advisory Committee shares the concern expressed in paragraph 17.11 of the proposed budget regarding the fact that a large proportion of the recipients of ESCAP publications, in particular least developed, landlocked and island developing countries do not have the capacity to shift from the traditional mode of publications to electronic mode. The Committee is of the view that the Commission should take into account all relevant factors before deciding on which mode of transfer and/or distribution best meets the needs of the recipients of the Commission's publications.

V.50. An amount of $27,330,100, before recosting, is indicated under programme support. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 17.116 that an amount of $159,800 is proposed to provide continuing support for IMIS operations subsequent to completion of installation. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that 14 work-months for one P-4 and one Local level post had been requested (2 months in 2000 and 12 months in 2001). As indicated in paragraph V.12 above, the Committee is of the view that steps must be taken to ensure that IMIS, once installed, is adequately maintained for all regional commissions.

V.51. Paragraph 17.118, indicates an amount of $167,500 under contractual services, which includes resources for the second phase of the contractual design and development of the ESCAP Programme Monitoring System (PROMS). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the PROMS software, developed in the late 1980s as a computer-assisted means of collecting and consolidating information required for the preparation for submission of performance reports on the programme of work to Headquarters and intergovernmental bodies, does not at the moment interface with other systems. It does, however, complement the central monitoring system controlled by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, allowing the Commission to gather and process data and statistical tables in the format specified by the Office of Internal Oversight Services for preparation of performance reports. The Committee was further informed that ESCAP, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of Internal Oversight Services are collaborating in the development of an electronic interface between PROMS and the Integrated Meeting Documentation Information System (IMDIS) being developed currently at Headquarters.

V.52. The Advisory Committee refers to the collapse of a ceiling section of the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok in part XI, section 31 below. As indicated therein, the original contractor has undertaken to make all the repairs at no cost to the United Nations. The only expense involved for the United Nations was the fee of an independent counsel equivalent to $2,150.

V.53. As regards the use of the Conference Centre, the Committee was informed that from 1998 to April 1999, 550 ESCAP meetings and 140 non-ESCAP events had taken place in the Conference Centre, and reimbursement, inclusive of catering activities, amounted to $131,700. For 2000–2001, 530 and 160 ESCAP and non-ESCAP events, respectively, are projected, and the related reimbursement is estimated at $230,000.

Section 18
Economic development in Europe

V.54. As shown in table 18.1 of the proposed programme budget, regular budget resources proposed under this section would amount to $43,590,100 before recosting, reflecting a resource growth of $40,500. The extrabudgetary resources amount to $9,828,500, compared to $12,712,600 for the biennium 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee notes that this reduction is mostly due to decreases in funding from UNFPA and UNDP. The Committee was further informed that it was due to the fact that several projects were to end during 1999.

Furthermore, in view of the importance given to the impact of ageing on the population, talks were currently ongoing, in particular with UNFPA.

V.55. The Advisory Committee notes that the budget estimates proposed reflect the programme and organizational restructuring that has taken place in ECE in the recent past, and that the programme of work is in conformity with the overall objectives of the revised medium-term plan for 1998–2001,[10] which discontinued former subprogramme 8, Industry and technology, and incorporated the former subprogramme 4, Trade facilitation, in the revised subprogramme 6, Trade, industry and enterprise development.

V.56. The Advisory Committee further notes, as indicated in paragraph 18.3 of the proposed programme budget, that the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work reviewed the programmes of work of the principal subsidiary bodies and that its recommendations were endorsed by the Commission in December 1998; the programme budget fascicle was subsequently reviewed in 1999. They are thus reflected in the proposals for section 18 for the biennium 2000–2001. The Committee, in paragraph V.53 of its previous report,[1] indicated the introduction of this mechanism by ECE as part of the reform undertaken.

V.57. The Advisory Committee commends the Commission for the care with which the narratives have been presented. The Committee also welcomes the attention paid by the ECE legislative bodies to the publications programme of the Commission. The effect of further reviews should be indicated in the context of workload indicators to be provided in future.

V.58. As can be seen from the table contained in paragraph 18.13, the Secretary-General estimates that of the total resources proposed under section 18, 82.8 per cent of regular budget resources and 87.9 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be spent on activities related to the programme of work; 10 per cent of regular budget resources and 12.1 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be required for programme support; and 7.2 per cent of regular budget resources would be allocated to executive direction and management.

V.59. As indicated in paragraph 18.14, the resources for administration and general services for ECE are consolidated under section 27E, Administration, Geneva, and under section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services, and are administered by the United Nations Office at Geneva in an integrated fashion.

V.60. As can be seen from table 18.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed is 196 (115 Professional and 81 General Service), compared to 195 in 1998–1999. The number of extrabudgetary posts proposed is 5 (which represents a decrease from 9 posts during the biennium 1998–1999). The Advisory Committee was further informed that as of 30 April 1999, the vacancy rates were 2.6 per cent at the Professional level and 1.2 per cent at the General Service level.

V.61. A net resource decrease of $208,100 is shown under executive direction and management, resulting from a decrease of $220,400 under posts requirements, partially offset by an increase of $12,300 under contractual services. With regard to posts, the Advisory Committee notes that paragraph 18.19 indicates the proposal to redeploy the staff and other resources related to the Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities to programme support (1 D-1, 1 P-3 and 1 General Service posts), and one P-2 post from programme support to assist the Office of the Executive Secretary in "drafting reports and briefing notes, servicing the Commission and ad hoc meetings and following up ad hoc issues". The Coordinating Unit provides assistance and response to the urgent needs of the countries with economies in transition.

V.62. The Advisory Committee also notes the proposals to establish a new P-4 post for planning and execution of all information activities of ECE, and to reclassify a P-3 post to the P-4 level in relation to management and coordination of the work programme,

programme monitoring and evaluation, and inter-agency coordination, among other functions, under executive direction and management. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Department of Public Information, United Nations Office at Geneva, had previously provided a P-4 post for information activities, which was abolished during 1996–1997. ECE had had to borrow a post from its environment programme to carry out those functions. The intention is to restore the post, in view of the need to adequately support the environmental programme. The Committee recommends acceptance of the proposals.

V.63. The increase of $12,300 under contractual services, mentioned in paragraph V.61 above, is related to external production, including translation, printing and binding of specialized publications and informational brochures for which internal translation and reproduction services are not always available, as indicated in paragraph 18.22. The Advisory Committee was informed of delays in translation and printing, even in cases where submissions were made well in advance, because of overload at the United Nations Office at Geneva (see chap. I above).

V.64. Regular budget resources under programme of work show a decrease of $265,600, or 0.7 per cent, as shown in table 18.6. This net decrease includes decreases of $397,800 under grants and contributions for computer processing, telecommunications, data storage and other specialized services provided to ECE, and of $23,900 under travel. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the contribution to ICC billed to the Commission by the United Nations Office at Geneva had been reviewed, and that it had been determined, on the basis of usage, that less resources would be required. These are partially offset by increases under posts, as a result of the proposed reclassification of two P-3 posts to the P-4 level under subprogrammes 1 and 5 ($81,000), under consultants and experts ($15,000), under contractual services for the external production of some publications ($40,100) and under supplies and materials ($20,000), as explained in paragraph 18.11 (b) of the proposed programme budget. The Committee recommends acceptance of the two reclassifications.

V.65. Subprogramme 6, Trade, industry and enterprise development shows a resource growth of $2,708,000 (from $3,210,900 in 1998–1999), resulting from the redeployment of resources formerly allocated to subprogramme 4, Trade facilitation, as indicated in paragraph V.55 above.

V.66. The Advisory Committee sought additional information on systems used for programme monitoring. In this regard, the Committee was informed that ECE does not have a computerized management system for monitoring programme implementation, but that it is reviewing the possibility of utilizing the same system as that used by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

V.67. An increase of $514,200, over an appropriation of $3,865,300 for the biennium 1998–1999, is shown in table 18.24 for programme support. The Advisory Committee notes that a large part of the increase in programme support relates to posts ($533,500), as a result of the redeployment of the three posts of the Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities from executive direction and management, as mentioned in paragraph V.61 above, and travel ($23,900), in order to allow the staff of the Unit to oversee the operational activities related to economies in transition in particular. In this regard, the Committee notes that total travel resources for ECE are maintained at the same level as the appropriation for 1998–1999, and that the increase under programme support simply corresponds to a redeployment of resources. Moreover, the Committee was informed during its hearings that the level maintained has never been commensurate with the increase in membership of the Commission since the early 1990s (which went from 34 to 55 countries) and the related needs. The Committee notes that while the provision for 1990–1991, related to a membership of 34 countries, amounted to $464,100, the one for 2000–2001, related to a membership of 55 countries, amounts to $622,100. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General review the resources allocated for travel and make justified proposals for increases or redeployments as required. The Committee also notes the proposed reclassification of one P-4 post to the P-5 level for the Chief of the Administration and Common Services Unit, as recommended by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and indicated in paragraph 18.109 of the proposed programme budget. The Committee agrees with this proposal.

Section 19
Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean

V.68. The estimate for section 19 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 amounts to $83,073,200, before recosting, in regular budget requirements and $16,150,600 in extrabudgetary resources. The proposal under the regular budget reflects a resource growth of $389,200, or 0.4 per cent, over the 1998–1999 appropriation. The growth is mainly due to the proposed reclassification of three Local level posts to the P-2 level and the additional requirements (equivalent to 1 P-4 and 1 Local level post for 14 months) under general temporary assistance for IMIS support and maintenance to be provided upon the completion and installation of all IMIS releases at ECLAC.

V.69. With regard to the decrease of approximately $5 million in extrabudgetary resources, the Advisory Committee was informed that there was a current trend putting less emphasis on voluntary funds in the region and that the reduction would have a negative impact on the level of technical cooperation projects or activities.

V.70. The Advisory Committee notes that the budget proposal, as indicated in paragraph 19.10, reflects "a carefully selected work programme, duly consulted on by member Governments during the twenty-seventh session of the Commission held in Aruba (May 1998) and further reviewed in detail and prioritized by the fourth meeting of the ad hoc working group established pursuant to resolution 553 (XXVI), convened in Santiago in October 1998". Moreover, it is consistent with the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001, as revised,[10] which includes a new subprogramme 12, Mainstreaming the gender perspective into regional development. As indicated to the Committee, the implementation of the new subprogramme will, for the most part, rely on an internal reallocation of resources within ECLAC.

V.71. In addition, and as part of the restructuring trend embarked upon by ECLAC, the Advisory Committee notes that the budget proposal includes the full integration of the Latin American and Caribbean Center for Demography (CELADE) into the ECLAC organizational structure as the Population Division (subprogramme 8), and the reorganization of the Division of Environment and Development into two new, smaller, but more specialized divisions — the Division of Environment and Human Settlements and the Division of Natural Resources and Infrastructure Services (subprogramme 7). The Committee was informed that this incorporation had taken place in the context of the review of the structure of ECLAC; it provides a more streamlined and integrated structure, which would enable better use of common support services, taking into account the decrease in extrabudgetary resources from UNFPA, while allowing the maintenance of essential areas of activities.

V.72. The representatives of ECLAC informed the Advisory Committee that the results of the pilot management scheme mentioned in paragraphs V.65 and V.66 of the Committee's previous report[1] were being evaluated. In the context of the formulation of the next medium-term plan and programme budget, an assessment would be made of the extent to which programme implementation could be enhanced by further reform of administrative and personnel procedures. In this regard, the Committee notes from paragraph 19.12 that, as for organizational and management issues, restructuring will continue during the coming biennium in order to develop a more streamlined organizational structure. The Committee welcomes the intent of the ECLAC secretariat to continue "its devotion of major efforts towards the development of a more efficient and effective secretariat through cost-saving measures, rigorous programming, training and improvement of horizontal and vertical communication among staff". The Committee trusts that the process of reform in ECLAC will continue to be carried out in close cooperation with the States members of the Commission and that changes made will be fully consistent with the decisions of the General Assembly.

V.73. As indicated in table 19.3, the proposed staffing table provides for a total of 491 regular budget posts (181 Professional and 310 General Service), reflecting the reclassification of three Local level posts to the P-2 level under programme of work, as mentioned in paragraph V.68 above. The total number of extrabudgetary posts decreases from 42 in 1998–1999 to 36 proposed for 2000–2001. The Advisory Committee was informed that there were 10 vacancies at the Professional level (5.5 per cent) and 12 vacancies at the Local level (3.9 per cent), as of end of April 1999. The Committee also enquired about the high ratio of local to Professional staff. The Committee was informed that a large number of local staff perform substantive activities, including research and data analysis. The Committee requests that a clear presentation of the functions carried out by local staff be made in the next programme budget submission.

V.74. The Advisory Committee notes the improvement in the presentation of the estimates and in particular the indication of main and other end-users of programme outputs, which is particularly useful.

V.75. Resources under subprogramme 1, Linkages with the global economy, competitiveness, and production specialization, are decreased by $1,054,800, or 33.1 per cent, over the biennium 1998–1999, owing mostly to redeployment of staff resources (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 4 Local level posts) to subprogramme 7, Environmental and land resource sustainability, and one P-3 post to subprogramme 2, Integration, open regionalism and regional cooperation. There is also a reclassification of a Local level post to the P-2 level; the Committee recommends acceptance of this request.

V.76. Resources under subprogramme 5, Social development and social equity, are decreased by $597,200, or 22.5 per cent, mostly as a result of the redeployment of staff resources (1 P-5, 1 P-2 and 1 Local level post) to the new subprogramme 12, Mainstreaming the gender perspective into regional development. Resources under subprogramme 7 are increased by $1,113,000, or 29.2 per cent, as a result of the redeployment of staff resources from subprogramme 1, as mentioned in paragraph V.75 above, in addition to a P-3 post from subprogramme 3, Productive, technological and entrepreneurial development, as a result of the restructuring in ECLAC.

V.77. As mentioned in paragraph V.70 above, subprogramme 12 is a newly established programme which will ensure an integrated strategy for gender equality. Proposed regular budget resources amount to $827,700 before recosting. Extrabudgetary resources estimated at $285,000 are also indicated in table 19.31.

V.78. The Advisory Committee notes, as indicated in paragraph 19.39 of the proposed programme budget, that 10 of the subprogrammes are implemented in Santiago, and one is implemented at each of the subregional headquarters — Mexico City (subprogramme 10) and Port-of-Spain (subprogramme 11).

V.79. The Advisory Committee was informed that ECLAC was about to complete the development of an integrated information system for management. The Committee was further informed that the system would monitor programme implementation, including monitoring of staff and financial resources; that the cost of the system was approximately $70,000; and that following recommendations of the Committee and the internal auditors from the Office of Internal Oversight Services, it would interface with the system used in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in order to allow common reporting.

V.80. The Advisory Committee further noted that under some subprogrammes, reference was made, as one of the outputs, to the development or upgrading of software and databases. The Committee recommends that future estimates provide, in the context of each subprogramme, information on the use of modern technology in programme implementation.

V.81. The Advisory Committee took note that most of the main end-users of the outputs of the ECLAC programme are government authorities or public and private agencies. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Commission distributed information electronically, upon request, and that it had noted a substantial increase in the numbers of hits and downloads from the ECLAC Web sites. For example, the Committee was informed that while the number of visitors to the ECLAC Web site was 3,108 in September of 1997, the number had increased to 57,049 by May 1999. Moreover, from November 1998 until April 1999, 107,747 files had been downloaded in PDF format and 888,166 in HTM format. The Committee welcomes the increasing use of electronic means to transfer information to end-users and encourages the Commission to expand the use of modern technology to collect data and disseminate information. Electronic methods of distribution should nevertheless be selected carefully by targeting those with the capacity to receive or supply information electronically.

Section 20

Economic and social development in Western Asia

V.82. The regular budget resources proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 under this section, amount to $49,994,400 before recosting. An amount of $481,200 is indicated under extrabudgetary resources. The Advisory Committee notes that the proposal under the regular budget reflects a resource growth of $242,100, or 0.4 per cent, over the 1998–1999 appropriations. This growth is mostly due to increases under other staff costs, related to IMIS support and maintenance, and contractual security arrangements. There is also an increase in contractual services, owing to the need for outsourcing services of telephone operators, messengers and related support functions.

V.83. The significant decrease in extrabudgetary resources, from $3,880,400 indicated for 1998–1999 to $481,200 for the biennium 2000–2001, is mostly due to the fact that the projections for the coming biennium, indicated in table 20.1 (2), are based on confirmed contributions at the time of the presentation of the budget estimates. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the projections indicated in the last budget had proven unrealistic. Therefore, should more resources be received, they would be reflected in the next presentation.

V.84. The proposed staffing table for ESCWA for the biennium 2000–2001 provides for the same number of regular budget posts as for 1998–1999 (266 posts). This includes 103 Professional posts, 160 Local level posts and 3 Field Service posts. One extrabudgetary post is indicated for 2000–2001. The Advisory Committee was further informed that, as of 17 June 1999, there were 24 vacancies in the Professional category (23.3 per cent) and 10 vacancies in the General Service category (7.6 per cent). The observations of the Committee are reflected in paragraph V.11 above.

V.85. The Advisory Committee took note of the response provided by ESCWA to the Advisory Committee's recommendation made in paragraph V.6 of its previous report,[1] contained in table 20.21 of the proposed budget. The Committee is of the opinion that the experience of other regional commissions should be sought with a view to addressing any problems regarding synchronization of the intergovernmental meetings with the planning and budgetary preparation cycle of the United Nations (see para. V.6 above). In addition, the Committee is of the opinion that the role of intergovernmental review, in particular as regards publication programmes, should be indicated more clearly.

V.86. Although the Advisory Committee noticed an improvement in the presentation of the narratives for this section, the Committee recommends that the role of automation and of information technology in programme implementation be more clearly spelled out in the estimates.

V.87. As shown in table 20.1, a reduction of $1,446,600, or 44.9 per cent, is proposed under executive direction and management. This reduction is offset by an increase of $1,576,200, or 6.6 per cent, under programme support and $112,500, or 0.4 per cent, under programme of work.

V.88. The Advisory Committee notes that the $1,446,600 reduction under executive direction and management relates basically to the redeployment of posts of the Programme Planning and Coordination Unit to programme support ($1,426,600), where, as indicated in paragraph 20.13, they will be merged with the posts of the Technical Cooperation Division to form the Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division.

V.89. The increase of $112,500, or 0.4 per cent, under programme of work, as indicated in paragraph 20.4 (b) of the proposed budget, is related to additional requirements of $28,400 under general temporary assistance for statistical data-related tasks; $48,100 under consultants and expert group meetings in a number of areas; and $36,000 under travel.

V.90. Resources under programme support increase by $1,576,200 owing to additional requirements under staff costs for the redeployment of the staff of the Programme Planning and Coordination Unit, mentioned in paragraph V.88 above. There is also a proposal to reclassify a P-3 post to the P-4 level in response to the rising needs for automation and electronic data-processing and communication and the increased complexity of the work involved. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the reclassification. Increases under other staff costs relate to the provision of continuing support for IMIS, as mentioned in paragraph V.82 above, and the need for contractual security coverage for the new building and parking areas in Beirut and under contractual services. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that 11 established posts existed for this purpose and that 24 additional security guards and 3 sergeants were being contracted out because of increased demonstrations and security needs at the new building.

V.91. The increase of $459,100 to $899,900 under contractual services, as indicated in paragraph 20.67, is mostly due to additional requirements for the outsourcing of services of telephone operators, messengers and related support functions. A decrease of $728,100, or 17 per cent, is indicated under general operating expenses (see para. 20.68 of the proposed programme budget). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that this decrease reflected, in great part, the experience obtained in the current biennium with regard to the operation of the new headquarters of the regional commission.

V.92. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the total costs for the move to the permanent headquarters of the regional commission in Beirut, which took place during the fourth quarter of 1997, amounted to $14,911,810. The Committee had noted the move in paragraph V.79 of its first report on the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999.[1] The Committee reported, at that time, that the cost of the move was being estimated at approximately $5.5 million. Efforts were being made to raise additional extrabudgetary resources for the move. In this regard, the Committee has now been informed that extrabudgetary resources received totalled $12,064,121. Part of the shortfall of $2,847,689 was therefore met from the regular budget appropriation for 1996–1997 and is reflected in the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 1996–1997 (A/C.5/52/32 and Corr.1), where an increase of $1,475,100 is shown under posts as the net result of an increase of $1,843,600 under common staff costs and a decrease of $368,500 under salaries. The Committee was further informed that any additional requirements would be reported in the context of the second performance report for 1998–1999. The building housing ESCWA headquarters in Beirut (United Nations House) is offered free of rent by the Government of Lebanon.

V.93. The Advisory Committee sought additional information on the use of the conference centre facilities at United Nations House. The Committee was informed that official use of the facilities only began on 1 January 1998. With regard to the use of the facilities by other United Nations agencies, the Committee was informed that ESCWA, as part of the arrangement with them, provides conference services during office hours at no charge (in-kind contribution). As for maintenance, utilities, cleaning and security services, ESCWA assumes 90 per cent of total expenses, the rest being assumed by other United Nations agencies. The representatives of ESCWA assured the Committee that by establishing common services at the United Nations House in Beirut, savings had been achieved for all concerned.

V.94. The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that the total number of ESCWA and non-ESCWA meetings held between 1 January 1998 to 31 May 1999 was 67 (134 working days). The estimated number of meetings scheduled for 2000–2001 is 41 (106 working days).

Section 21
Regular programme of technical cooperation

V.95. As indicated in paragraph 21.2 of the proposed programme budget, the regular programme of technical cooperation complements technical assistance available to the developing countries from other sources of funds. Furthermore, paragraph 21.5 indicates that since the scope and composition of the activities under the regular programme are based on the individual requests of Governments, the proposals at this stage only indicate major areas of activity and relevant secretariat units responsible for their implementation. The three main types of technical cooperation activities are short-term advisory services, field projects and training.

V.96. The proposed budget for the biennium 2000–2001 under section 21 is estimated at $45,138,900, which is the same level as was approved for the biennium 1998–1999. The breakdown of the proposed budget requirements by sectoral advisory services ($19,428,000) and by regional and subregional advisory services ($25,710,900) is provided in tables 21.2 and 21.3.

V.97. The Advisory Committee transmits the estimates under section 21 to the General Assembly for appropriate action.

Part VI
Human rights and humanitarian affairs

VI.1. The Secretary-General's estimate for 2000–2001 for part VI, Human rights and humanitarian affairs, amounts to $132,459,500 comprising $43,429,900 for section 22, Human rights; $45,650,200 for section 23, Protection of and assistance to refugees; $23,350,400 for section 24, Palestine refugees; and $20,029,000 for section 25, Humanitarian assistance.

Section 22
Human rights

VI.2. The Advisory Committee notes from table 22.2 of the proposed programme budget that for 2000–2001 the amount of $42,369,300, before recosting, is proposed under the regular budget; this reflects a net resource increase of $1,536,700, or 3.7 per cent, as compared to appropriation of $40,832,600 for 1998–1999. As indicated in the same table, for 2000–2001, the amount of $30,364,500 is expected under extrabudgetary resources, as compared to the estimate of $35,541,900 for 1998–1999, largely owing to the elimination of resources for human rights activities in Rwanda and Burundi. The Committee notes from the unaudited interim financial statements for the six-month period of the biennium 1998–1999 ended 30 June 1998 that for the Trust Fund for the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda, an amount of $6.6 million is shown as total reserves and fund balances as of 30 June 1998. The corresponding amount for the Trust Fund for the Human Rights Operation in Burundi is $2.7 million. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that consultations were under way with donors on the disposition of these resources.

VI.3. The Secretary-General proposes seven new posts (2 P-5, 2 P-4 and 3 P-3). The Secretary-General also proposes reclassification of a General Service post from the G-6 to the G-7 level for a Computer Information Assistant and the redeployment of two posts (1 P-4 for a Programme Management Officer from New York to Geneva and 1 P-5 post for a Senior Legal Officer from Geneva to New York), (see paras. 22.33, 22.50, 22.67 and 22.80 of the proposed programme budget).

VI.4. The Advisory Committee was informed that the average vacancy rate for Professional staff in 1998 was 18.2 per cent, and that as at the end of April 1999 it was 15.7 per cent. For General Service staff, the average rate for 1998 was 17.5 per cent, and as at the end of April 1999 it was 17.3 per cent. The total number of vacant posts as at the end of April 1999 was 23 (14 Professional and 9 General Service). The average vacancy rate for the last four months was 16.3 per cent. Upon enquiry, the representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights informed the Committee that attempts were being made to reduce considerably the vacancy rates by the end of 1999. The Committee was also informed that the current procedures followed in filling posts, especially at the entry level, contributed to the lengthy recruitment process. For example, it takes considerable time for the Office of Human Resources Management to track and select candidates from the roster of candidates who had passed the competitive entry examination. That roster often contained names of candidates who had stayed on the roster for more than 3 years, and very often those candidates will no longer be available for recruitment.

VI.5. As shown in table 22.4, an amount of $4,951,100, before recosting, is requested for policy-making organs. A total of 25 policy-making organs, including committees and working groups are enumerated in table 22.4 and paragraphs 22.10 to 22.21 of the proposed programme budget. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that for the biennium 2000–2001, a total of 1469 meetings (917 plenary meetings and 552 meetings of

working groups) are expected to be held against 1,488 budgeted for the biennium 1998–1999. As to the number of human rights reports, the Committee was informed that 258 were expected to be produced as against 311 for the biennium 1998–1999. The Committee recalls its observations in paragraph VI.11 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999[1] that "the human rights programme has given rise to a complex intergovernmental machinery. It is the view of the Committee that the time has come for the Commission to come up with a more pragmatic meeting programme for the various subcommissions, committees and other groups". In paragraph VI.12 of the same report, the Committee observed "that the number of documents involved and the setting of unrealistic deadlines for completion could adversely affect the efficiency of the legislative process".

VI.6. The action taken is reflected in table 22.18 of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee considers the information inadequate. Upon enquiry as to the action taken by the Commission at its forty-fifth session concerning publications and documentation, the Committee was informed that an inter-sessional open-ended working group had been established by the Commission to continue the comprehensive examination of the report of the bureau on the subject (E/CN.4/1999/104 and Corr.1); the conclusions will be reviewed at the Commission's fifty-seventh session.

VI.7. On the question of reporting to donors, the Advisory Committee welcomes the action taken, as reported in table 22.18 of the proposed programme budget. However, it was not clear from the testimony of the representatives of the High Commissioner or from the information in table 22.18 the extent to which the current reporting procedures had been streamlined. The Committee recommends that additional information be included in the next proposed programme budget indicating the extent and effect of the reported streamlining; such information should indicate what processes have been dispensed with, what reports have been merged and how the new procedure affected the workload of the related units of the office and the secretariat of the Commission on Human Rights.

VI.8. With regard to presentation, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the inclusion of consolidated tables of appropriate workload indicators under each subprogramme would constitute a useful tool in assessing resource needs for this section. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that such information, including the number of meetings and reports and publications, be provided in the next proposed programme budget. Such information should include comparative data for the previous two bienniums. The Committee does not expect an increase in the length of the fascicle of this section.

VI.9. The Advisory Committee notes from table 22.6 of the proposed programme budget that under the regular budget, a total of $5,375,000 is requested before recosting, for executive direction and management (an increase of 5.8 per cent) and a total of $335,600 is projected under extrabudgetary resources. Executive direction and management comprises the two units of the Office of the High Commissioner, one in Geneva and the other in New York. The Committee notes from the organizational chart and paragraph 22.32 that eight posts under the regular budget (1 D-2, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 General Service (Principal level) and 2 General Service (Other level) and one P-2 post funded from extrabudgetary resources are proposed for 2000–2001 for the New York Office. For the Geneva Office, 15 posts under the regular budget (1 USG, 1 ASG, 3 P-5, 2 P-4 and 8 General Service) and one P-2 funded from extrabudgetary resources are proposed for 2000–2001.

VI.10. The proposed number of posts for the New York Office includes a request for a new P-4 post and a redeployment of a P-4 post to the Geneva Office in exchange for a P-5 post from Geneva to New York. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 22.33 of the proposed budget document that the new P-4 post and the redeployed P-5 post are requested for the drafting of substantive human rights papers for the executive committees. In paragraph 22.34 of the proposed programme budget, it is indicated that the Office of the High Commissioner is a member of each of the four executive committees and that each committee meets approximately twice a month. The four executive committee comprise international peace and security, humanitarian cooperation, development, and economic and social cooperation. As indicated in paragraphs 22.33 and 22.34 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General is therefore proposing two posts, one at the P-5 level (through redeployment) and the other at the P-4 level, for the preparation of briefing papers and submissions to the executive committees. The P-5 post would also provide for the Senior Legal Officer and Deputy to the Director of the New York Office.

VI.11. The functions of the New York Office are explained in paragraph 22.31 of the proposed programme budget. Upon enquiry, and in response to the observations of the Committee in paragraph VI.10 of its previous report,[1] the Deputy High Commissioner informed the Committee that it was a misconception to regard the New York Office as liaison office. According to him, the Office performed more than the traditional liaison tasks and hence the need for the request of additional personnel.

VI.12. The Advisory Committee does not share the impression given in paragraphs 22.33 and 22.34 of the proposed programme budget and the statements of the representatives of the High Commissioner that effective participation in the executive committees should depend mainly on the work of the staff of the New York Office. The headquarters of the Office of the High Commissioner is in Geneva. It is the opinion of the Committee that input to the work of the executive committees should also be made by the substantive units of the Geneva Office and the staff of the High Commissioner in Geneva. This would obviate the need to increase the personnel of the New York Office and indeed would make the participation in the work of the committees profit from a larger pool of expertise available not only at the New York Office, but also at Geneva. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes that the executive committee arrangement was instituted by the Secretary-General to coordinate the implementation of mandates entrusted to him by Member States. The work of these committees should therefore not entail a request for additional resources over and above those requested and authorized for the implementation of those mandates. Accordingly, while the Committee agrees with the redeployment to the New York Office of a P-5 post, the Committee does not agree with the request for the additional new P-4 post. However, should the High Commissioner conclude that such a post is indispensable, then this should be obtained by redeployment. The Committee has no objection to the other six new posts requested and to the reclassification of one General Service (Other level) post to the Principal level.

VI.13. The Advisory Committee notes from table 22.9 of the proposed programme budget that $8,035,500, before recosting, is requested for subprogramme 1, Right to development, research and analysis. In this connection, the Committee recalls paragraph VI.8 of its previous report,[1] in which it expressed the opinion that the Secretary-General should have explained more clearly how the provisions of paragraphs 38 and 39 of General Assembly resolution 50/214 were being implemented. The Committee requests the Secretary-General, in the context of the next proposed programme budget, to identify more clearly resources related to the right to development.

VI.14. With regard to field offices under subprogramme 3, Advisory services, technical cooperation, support to human rights fact-finding procedures and field activities, upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that they are located in the following countries and regions in Africa, Asia and Europe: Angola, the Great Lakes region and Central Africa, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, the former Yugoslavia, the Russian

Federation, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In connection with activities in Afghanistan, the Committee was informed that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan maintains offices in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, and is the central coordination point for the various components of the United Nations humanitarian assistance programme.

VI.15. An amount of $200,600 is requested in paragraph 22.92 of the proposed programme budget for external printing. The Advisory Committee understands that recourse is often had to external printing because of special needs that cannot be accommodated by in-house printing facilities of the United Nations. As indicated in Chapter I above, special printing needs should be reviewed to ascertain if these requirements are really necessary or if a format could be chosen to allow utilization of internal printing capacities. In this connection, the Committee has recommended that the capacity of the Geneva printing facility be reviewed with a view to ensuring that it can accommodate printing needs in a cost-effective manner.

VI.16. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 22.92 of the proposed programme budget that an amount of $88,700 is requested for software licence upgrade and an ITU Web site hosting fee. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that ITU currently also hosts Web sites of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and provides Internet services to WTO, ILO and WIPO as well.

VI.17. The composition of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus is described in paragraph 22.97 of the proposed programme budget. It is composed of three members: one appointed by each of the two communities and a third appointed by the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Each member can have up to two assistants. The United Nations is responsible for the expenses of the third member, his two assistants and the operating expenses of their office. The three-member Committee was established in 1981. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the last meeting of the Committee was held on 17 May 1999 in the office of the third member of the Committee at the Ledra Palace Hotel.

VI.18. As indicated in Table 22.17 of the proposed programme budget, an amount of $595,100, before recosting, is proposed for the Committee in respect of the first assistant to the third member, a local secretary and a driver, fees, travel subsistence for the third member and other related costs. The Advisory Committee was informed that for 1996–1997, out of an appropriation of $520,000, actual expenditure for the same period amounted to $444,149, leaving an unencumbered balance of $75,581, and for 1998, out of an appropriation of $326,600 actual expenditure for the same period amounted to $249,290, leaving an unencumbered balance of $77,310.

VI.19. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that a total of $6,413,400, before recosting, was requested in this section for perennial activities resulting from Economic and Social Council mandates. In this connection, the Committee reiterates its position contained in its report on the relationship between the treatment of perennial activities in the programme budget and the use of the contingency fund (A/53/7/Add.9).

Section 23
Protection of and assistance to refugees

VI.20. As indicated in paragraph 23.14 of the proposed programme budget, in accordance with article 20 of the statute of UNHCR, no expenditure other than administrative expenditures relating to the functioning of the Office of the High Commissioner is borne by the budget of the United Nations, and all other activities of the Office are financed by voluntary contributions. The proposed contribution from the regular budget for 2000–2001 is $45,051,000 before recosting, the same level of resources as for the biennium 1998–1999.

VI.21. As indicated in table 23.3 of the proposed programme budget, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 is 220 (89 posts in the Professional category and above and 131 General Service posts), the same number of posts as for the biennium 1998–1999.

VI.22. The amount of $1,684,378,200 is projected for extrabudgetary resources, representing a decrease as compared with the estimates of $1,803,855,100 for 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee reviews the budget of extrabudgetary operations of UNHCR and submits its report to the Executive Committee of the programme of UNHCR. The Advisory Committee has reported to the Executive Committee on new definitions of programmes and related posts. The Committee has also reviewed a mock up budget based on new definitions recommended by the Committee. As indicated in paragraph 23.17 of the proposed programme budget, a review of the funding of UNHCR posts from the regular budget would take place "in the near future on the basis of the outcome of the new categorization of posts in UNHCR, the evolution of UNHCR requirements and the desirability of streamlining and simplifying the budgetary process. The outcome of the review will be submitted to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions". In this connection, the Committee requests that this review take into account the extent to which past budgetary agreements/disagreements on the role between voluntary contributions and regular resources has contributed to a weak financial situation.

Section 24
Palestine refugees

VI.23. The Advisory Committee recalls General Assembly resolution 3331 B of 17 December 1974, in which the Assembly decided that "the expenses for salaries of international staff in the service of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East which would otherwise be a charge on voluntary contributions should with effect from 1 January 1975 be financed by the regular budget of the United Nations for the duration of the Agency's mandate".

VI.24. The Advisory Committee notes from tables 24.1 and 24.3 of the proposed programme budget that for 2000–2001 the amount of $21,800,600, before recosting, is proposed under the regular budget, and the number of posts under the regular budget remains at 92 (82 in the Professional category and above and 10 General Service). Under extrabudgetary funding, the Committee was informed that a total of $726 million was projected rather than the amount of $772,786,000 indicated in tables 24.1 and 24.2 of the proposed budget document. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that a decrease in resources has had a direct impact on the quality of services provided by UNRWA.

VI.25. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 24.8 of the proposed programme budget that the number of locally employed staff funded from extrabudgetary funds total 22,000 in 2000–2001.

Section 25
Humanitarian assistance

VI.26. As shown in table 25.1 of the proposed programme budget, the estimate under this section amounts to $19,284,700, before recosting, reflecting a resource growth of $1,701,500, as compared to appropriations of $17,583,200 for 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee also notes from the same table that under extrabudgetary resources, the amount of $140,327,500 is projected.

VI.27. As indicated in table 25.3 of the proposed programme budget, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 is 54, reflecting an increase of 4 posts as compared with the total of 50 posts for the biennium 1998–1999. As indicated in the same table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 2000–2001 is 312, representing a decrease of 21 extrabudgetary posts as compared with the total of 333 for the biennium 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee notes that the reduction of 21 posts under extrabudgetary resources is largely accounted for by the removal from this section of the functions of demining, which were transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and the transfer to UNDP of the national capacity-building related to disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness. Four new posts (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 2 P-3) are requested, and five posts are proposed for redeployment (see para. 25.7). The reason for the request for the new posts is to improve "the balance between regular budget and extrabudgetary posts in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs". The P-5 post and one P-3 post are for subprogramme 1, Policy and analysis, to carry out the functions of chief of Policy Development and a policy development officer, respectively (see para. 25.25). The P-4 post and one P-3 post are for the functions of desk officers for section II, Emergencies in Africa, and section III, Emergencies in the rest of the world) of the Complex Emergency Response Branch in Geneva (see para. 25.35). The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the creation of the four new posts (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 2 P-3) and the redeployment of the five posts.

VI.28. The Advisory Committee sees no merit in the reasons given in paragraph 25.13 of the proposed programme budget for redeploying a P-2 posts from subprogramme 2, Complex emergencies, to the Geneva Liaison Unit of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. It is the view of the Advisory Committee that the ease with which contact can now be established between Geneva and New York using traditional and electronic means, including videoconferencing, does not justify the existence of the Liaison Unit in Geneva, let alone increasing the number of its personnel.

VI.29. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 25.36 of the proposed programme budget that an increase of $90,100 is requested under subprogramme 2 for consultants to develop a comprehensive manual on the best practices in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and the related database. The Committee also notes that this task is the output referred to in paragraph 25.24 (b) (ii) a of the proposed programme budget. The outputs under subprogramme 2 are to be funded from regular and extrabudgetary sources. The Committee notes from table 25.2 of the proposed programme budget that under extrabudgetary resources, a total of $23,363,300 is projected for consultants and experts. The Committee recognizes the need for the manual and, while it does not object to the proposed amount, it requests that before the funds are allotted, it should first be ascertained whether part or all of the funding could be obtained from extrabudgetary consultancy funds.

VI.30. An amount of $200,000 in additional funds is requested under contractual services to cover the cost of ITU services for the operation of ReliefWeb (see para. 25.69 of the proposed programme budget). Upon enquiry as to the reasons for contracting this service to ITU, the Advisory Committee was informed that ITU provides, in the opinion of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, better quality connectivity and technical support for similar prices, but, more importantly, it provides ReliefWeb with essential services, which are not available from the ICC. For example, while ICC allows clients to update their Web sites only once per day, ReliefWeb updates every one half hour. ITU provides guaranteed access to ReliefWeb, even if the Internet suffers a major breakdown. ITU is the lead United Nations agency on the Tamper convention for emergency telecommunications, and its service levels have been recognized by other United Nations agencies as well. As ITU is also the Internet service provider for the Permanent Missions at Geneva, Member States have the advantage of extremely fast access to ReliefWeb, as well as guaranteed access in the event of Internet failure.

VI.31. With regard to natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness, as indicated in paragraph 25.38 of the proposed budget, the operational aspects of natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness were transferred to UNDP, together with the related resources, in the form of a grant of $2.3 million. The Advisory Committee reported to the General Assembly that it had been informed that the grant was a one-time provision to enable UNDP to make the transition. The Committee was of the opinion that the matter needed clarification "since if it is decided that UNDP will carry out this function on behalf of the United Nations, then a permanent subvention would be needed" (A/52/7/Add.1, para.45). The Assembly, in paragraph 17 of its resolution 52/12 B, requested the Secretary-General to submit, before the end of the fifty second session, "a report on the method of financing of natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness activities beyond the biennium 1998–1999". In the report (A/53/641), the Secretary-General recommended that the regular budget continue granting UNDP a subvention. The amount for the grant, $2,309,300, is included under section 25 of the proposed programme budget and it has not been recosted. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that since it was a subvention that was not tied to a specific number of posts there was no need to recost the amount. Should the General Assembly decide to continue the grant to UNDP, the Committee would recommend that the grant be set at $2,310,000 for the biennium 2000–2001.

VI.32. As indicated in paragraph 25.39 of the proposed programme budget, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, ends on 31 December 1999. The Advisory Committee notes from table 25.13 of the proposed programme budget, that for the biennium for 2000–2001, the secretariat for the decade would comprise 13 posts (7 Professional and 6 General Service) all funded from extrabudgetary resources. In the same paragraph, it is indicated that a follow-up mechanism for disaster reduction in the twenty-first century is under consideration and that the content and structure of successor arrangements will have to be approved by the Assembly. The Committee notes from the same paragraph that one of the follow-up mechanisms would be to provide, within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for liaison and coordination of strategy among the various organizations and the private sector. The Committee is of the view that before another secretariat structure is established, it should first be determined whether the related tasks could be undertaken by existing units of the Secretariat in New York and Geneva.

VI.33. In connection with presentation and structure, the Advisory Committee notes that the organizational chart for the Office for the biennium 2000–2001 is much simpler compared with that presented for the biennium 1998–1999. However, the Committee considers that the structure of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance could benefit from further streamlining. The Committee notes from paragraph 25.18 of the proposed budget, the establishment of a "new Complex Emergency Response Branch in Geneva in order to enhance coordination of complex humanitarian emergencies under subprogramme 2". The Committee also notes that an "Emergency Liaison Branch has been established in New York to coordinate with the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other concerned entities in respect of cross-cutting policy issues, country situations and United Nations field operations with humanitarian, political, security and military dimensions".

VI.34. The Advisory Committee is not persuaded by the rationale for this division as explained in paragraphs 25.18 and 25.29. The Committee doubts the extent to which this arrangement ensures "an appropriate, timely and effective response to ongoing and incipient complex emergencies" (see para. 25.30). It is the experience of the Committee that such arrangements have the potential for cumbersome consultative and coordination processes with attendant delays in decision-making. In this connection, the Committee recalls the observations of the Board of Auditors, in paragraphs 105 to 109 of its report,[2] on delays experienced in the delivery of emergency services and grants. In its response in table 25.20 of the proposed programme budget, the Administration refers to the establishment of special administrative procedures entailing delegation of authority, but no further mention is made about delays in conveying approval of grants by donors. The Committee also notes with concern that it has taken more than three years to formulate the special administrative rules referred above.

VI.35. The Advisory Committee therefore questions the rationale of establishing an Emergency Liaison Branch in New York to perform the functions outlined in paragraphs 25.18 and 25.29 of the proposed programme budget. The Committee is of the view that in order to enhance operational efficiency, the functions of the two branches should be reviewed to determine the extent to which they could be combined under one organizational unit.

VI.36. The Advisory Committee also recommends that a review be made of the efficiency of the administrative functioning of the secretariat of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The secretariat is located in New York, and it has a liaison unit in Geneva. The Committee notes from paragraph 25.63 of the proposed programme budget that the Executive Office has one administrative service at New York and another at Geneva.

Part VII
Public information

Section 26
Public information

VII.1. The Secretary-General's regular budget estimates for part VII, totalling $145,734,000 for 2000–2001, cover only section 26 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. The estimates of $137,583,000, before recosting, reflect an increase of $2,009,000, or 1.4 per cent, compared with the appropriations for the biennium 1998–1999. The extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $6,241,800.

VII.2. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, in addition to the provision included under section 26, regular budget resources estimated at $6,116,400, before recosting, have been requested for public information activities under other sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, as follows:

Section		Posts: *Professional category and above*	Posts: *General Service category*	*Total cost (Thousands of US$)*
10.	Africa: New Agenda for Development	4	3	1 658.3
11A.	Trade and development	3	3	1 276.3
16.	Economic and social development in Africa	4	4	1 230.7
17.	Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	2	4	637.7
18.	Economic development in Europe	1	–	241.3
19.	Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean	1	3	914.8
20.	Economic and social development in Western Asia	–	2	157.3
	Total	**15**	**19**	**6 116.4**

VII.3. The Advisory Committee points out that substantive departments and offices of the Secretariat also perform public information activities, the cost of which cannot be easily identified, i.e. exhibitions, special events, seminars and workshops, various public information materials and the presentation of Web sites and pages on the Internet.

VII.4. As can be seen from table 26.2 of the proposed programme budget, the net increase of $2,009,000 is the result of resource growth under posts ($21,200), other staff costs ($921,900), travel ($677,900), contractual services ($1,465,400) and furniture and equipment ($43,000), partially offset by a reduction in resource requirements under general operating expenses ($676,800), supplies and materials ($428,500) and grants and contributions ($15,100).

VII.5. The proposed staffing requirements for the biennium 2000–2001, although reflecting no changes in the overall number of regular budget posts (730), provide for a reduction of two extrabudgetary posts compared with the current biennium, a reclassification of a P-5 regular budget post to the D-1 level and an internal redeployment of two regular budget posts (1 P-4 and 1 P-5). The Advisory Committee was informed that the vacancy rate for the Department of Public Information as at 30 April 1999 was 5.7 per cent (15 posts) for the Professional category and 1.5 per cent (7 posts) for the General Service category; the vacancy rate for United Nations information centres was 8.6 per cent (3 posts) for the Professional category and 1.3 per cent (3 posts) for the General Service category.

VII.6. The programme budget under section 26 will be implemented by the organizational structure shown in paragraph 26.6 of the proposed programme budget. The programme of work to be undertaken during the biennium 2000–2001 provides for four subprogrammes, and each of them is implemented by more than one organizational unit. Whereas the subprogrammes present programmatic aspects of work, the related post requirements and resource requirements are shown under organizational units. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that a combined presentation of both programmatic aspects of work and resource requirements, including posts, was not practical at this stage. Making the subprogramme congruent with organizational units would require extensive analysis and reorganization. Nevertheless, the Committee believes that greater congruence between programme content and organizational structure is possible and requests that this be done in the next proposed programme budget and that the Department of Public Information include workload indicators.

VII.7. The Advisory Committee also notes that, whereas the library at headquarters is under the Department of Public Information, the library at the United Nations Office at Geneva is under conference services. The rationale for this treatment was not clear from the testimony of the representatives of the Secretary-General who appeared before the Committee. A review of this matter should be undertaken, the results of which should be reported in the next proposed programme budget.

VII.8. As indicated in paragraph 26.52 of the proposed programme budget, a request is made under executive direction and management for the reclassification of a P-5 post to the D-1 level, reflecting the additional responsibilities placed on the post of Chief of Office, Office of the Under-Secretary-General, and Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General with regard to the reorientation of the Department. Requests are also made for the outward redeployment of one P-4 post and the inward redeployment of a P-5 post from within the Department. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the redeployments. As far as the proposed reclassification is concerned, the Committee was informed that prior to 1994, the post of Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General was at the D-1 level. Following the reorganization of the Department and the downgrading of the post of Head of the Department to the Assistant Secretary-General level in 1994, the post of Special Assistant was also downgraded from D-1 to P-5. The Committee points out that there are currently 20 D-1 posts under section 26. The Committee does not believe another D-1 is warranted, and if the functions of this particular post require it, then it should be obtained through an exchange or a redeployment within the Department.

VII.9. An amount of $206,100 (before recosting) is requested under executive direction and management to cover, *inter alia*, the cost of personal service contracts related to the creation of search programmes and databases for the United Nations Web site in official languages other than English. The Advisory Committee was informed that this was pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/208 C of 18 December 1998. The Committee points out that no statement of programme budget implications was submitted to the General Assembly in connection with the adoption of this resolution, and requests that cost estimates with a related Secretariat-wide plan be presented to the Assembly at the main part of its fifty-fourth session. The Committee also points out that the United Nations Web site should become a major instrument in the dissemination of information. According to the additional information provided by the Secretariat upon request, the number of accesses to the United Nations Web site has increased dramatically:

1996 – 11.5 million

1997 – 42.7 million (372 per cent over 1996)

1998 – 98.5 million (231 per cent over 1997)

1999 – 69.9 million (as of June 18)

1999 – 150 million (projected)

Average current accesses are approximately 3 million per week, which translates to 428,571 per day, or almost 5 accesses per second. These accesses come round the clock from 133 countries.

VII.10. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the development and maintenance of the Web site has been undertaken without a request for additional resources for this purpose. The Committee requested information on the current resources for designing and improvement of the Web site and for maintenance and upgrading of Web content in the

Department of Public Information. The Committee was informed that the following staff have been redeployed for this function:

Staff member	*Level*	*Redeployed from*
Chief of Section (Information Technology Section)	**P-4**	**News and Media Division**
Webmaster (also for Spanish)	**P-3**	**Dag Hammarskjöld Library**
Web site Coordinator, E, F	**P-3**	**News and Media Division**
Web site Coordinator, F	**P-3**	**Office of the Under-Secretary-General (not currently available)[a]**
Web site Design Assistant	**G-6**	**Dag Hammarskjöld Library**
Web site Programming Assistant	**G-5**	**Office of the Under-Secretary-General**
Web site Assistant	**G-4**	**Office of the Under-Secretary-General**

[a] **Staff member loaned to UNESCO with post.**

The Committee was informed that the functions of the Arabic, Chinese and Russian Web site coordination are being carried out through the use of general temporary assistance funds and temporary short-term loan of staff from other parts of the Department and, in the case of Arabic, from the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. Given the potential importance of the Web site and the Internet, the Committee trusts that adequate resources will be provided to this function.

VII.11. The Advisory Committee also sought clarification on the responsibilities of the Department of Public Information and other departments and offices of the Secretariat for developing, maintaining and administering the United Nations Web sites. According to the information submitted to the Committee, the Information Technology Section of the Department is responsible for the organization, maintenance and enhancement of the United Nations Web site. The Section reports directly to the Under-Secretary-General and receives guidance from the Communications and Coordination Service of the Department. Across the Department, as well as for the Secretariat, the Information Technology Section performs the following functions:

(a) Advisory: guidance and advice, consultation and coordination;

(b) Planning and development: document selection, oversight, monitoring, testing, training and promotion;

(c) Management and maintenance: troubleshooting, server administration and compliance;

(d) Administrative: evaluation, statistics, budgetary and supervision of section staff.

In addition to providing the overall look and feel of the Web site, the Department creates and maintains special pages for conferences, events, observances and current issues such as those on East Timor and Kosovo. The Department coordinates with content-providing departments and offices on identification of contents, assists content providers in preparing, presenting and uploading their sites, and receives guidelines on technical issues from the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management. The Information Technology Section of the Department of Public Information operates, administers and maintains the Organization's multi-media server, while the Information Technology Section of the Department of Management remains responsible for the primary Web server and related hardware, network and connectivity aspects.

VII.12. In consultation with content-providing offices, the Department of Public Information has developed general guidelines for posting materials on the Web site. Content-providing offices are responsible for their content, which they present within the general guidelines. The Department of Public Information has provided assistance to UNRWA, the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in preparing their Web sites for upload to the United Nations Web server. The Web sites for the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna are administered by the offices of the respective Directors-General. The Department of Public Information chairs an Inter-Departmental Working Group on the Internet, which meets as required and discusses coordination of the various elements of the Web site, such as design of top layer pages or the main home page. Ad hoc groups are also set up for specific thematic issues. A separate working group comprising the Department of Public Information and staff of the Information Technology Services Division meets as necessary to coordinate technical matters.

VII.13. While the Advisory Committee commends the Department of Public Information for the role it has played in the initial development and implementation of the United Nations Web site, the Committee is concerned about the apparent lack of coordination in the establishment and maintenance of other Web sites within the United Nations system (see also chap. I above). The Committee encourages the Department to take a leading role in the provision of advice for the development and improvement of departmental Web sites at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters.

VII.14. Information technology is a major instrument in the operations of the Department. However, as indicated in chapter I above, the extent to which the United Nations is investing in new technology cannot be determined with required precision, since not enough information is contained in the proposed programme budget. For example, while a provision of $1.2 million is requested in paragraph 26.72 of the proposed programme budget "for the first two phases of the conversion of the analog United Nations television to digital facilities", no information is included on the total cost of the project. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the timetable for converting from analog to digital television facilities is based on developments in the broadcast industry in response to the deadline date of 2006 set by the United States Federal Communications Commission for the completion of the shift to the digital television format in the United States. The News and Media Division is phasing in the acquisition of digital broadcasting equipment over the current and next three bienniums. On the assumption that the biennial capital equipment replacement budget would be maintained at $1.2 million, and with the possible exception of converting all television camera cables at Headquarters to fibre optic cable, the cost of the conversion from analog to digital broadcasting equipment would be met from the News and Media Division budget.

VII.15. The Advisory Committee sought additional information on the status of technological innovation at United Nations information centres and was informed that the Department of Public Information had provided all information centres with the latest communications technology hardware and software (word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheet and database applications). The majority of information centres have been equipped with current peripherals (scanners, laptops, digital cameras and CD-ROM writers) to meet their local programme activity needs. With the exception of those information centres located in countries where the necessary infrastructure does not exist, most information centres have Internet access and make extensive use of United Nations electronic resources. Sixty-eight out of 69 United Nations information centres have electronic mail facilities linking them with Headquarters and to other information centres and United Nations offices. Twenty-four information centres had developed Web sites as at June 1999. Resources for modernizing United Nations information centres are located both at Headquarters and the information centres, and are centrally managed by the Information Centre Service of the Department of Public Information, allowing it to exercise oversight and maintain the flexibility needed for response to the constantly changing technological requirements.

VII.16. As indicated in paragraph 26.69 (c) of the proposed programme budget, a provision of $496,300 "would be required for the development of the Department's radio broadcasting capability". The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that this would be for a small-scale pilot programme (see para. VII.18 below).

VII.17. The cost of the main project is estimated at $7.9 million per biennium, out of which $400,000 is expected to be achieved from savings through the streamlining and reduction of weekly tape programme production. The balance of $7.5 million per biennium will need to be mobilized through extrabudgetary contributions from Member States and other sources. In the report of the Secretary-General to the Committee on Information in May 1999, it was stated that, given the nearly $8 million required to be raised for the main project every biennium from extrabudgetary funds, the Department of Public Information "does not plan to initiate the complex and demanding pilot project until there are clear indications from Member States and others of the availability of the resources required".[16]

VII.18. The Committee on Information, in discussing the report of the Secretary-General, decided that a small-scale pilot programme in connection with the Department's direct international radio broadcasting project could be launched in the six official languages for rebroadcasting target regions for the period of one year.[17] The Committee on Information also requested the Department to "start as soon as possible the implementation of the pilot project through, *inter alia*, contacts with interested Member States and other specialized institutions, with a view to ensuring the assistance necessary for the success of the project, taking into account the need to enhance existing resources and services".[18] The Department is now initiating contacts with Member States to mobilize the necessary resources for the project. The Secretariat estimates the cost of the project, not including the cost of transmission, at $1,739,000, of which a provision of $496,300 has been included in the proposed programme budget for the Department of Public Information for the biennium 2000–2001. The balance of $1,242,700, and the separate cost of transmission services for radio programmes to the various regions, will be sought from Member States and other sources in the form of extrabudgetary contributions. The Advisory Committee points out that no statement of programme budget implications was submitted to the General Assembly in connection with the project for the development of international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations.

VII.19. The Advisory Committee points out further that, while the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001, as submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, outlined as a fourth objective of subprogramme 23.2, Information services, to consider "the establishment of an international broadcasting system capable of sending information about the United Nations directly to audiences around the world",[19] the same subprogramme of the medium-term plan for 1998–2001, as revised by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session,[10] does not provide for the establishment of the international broadcasting system. The Committee requests that a statement of programme budget implications be submitted to the General Assembly before the pilot project for the establishment of the international broadcasting system is undertaken.

VII.20. The Advisory Committee notes that in a number of paragraphs under section 26 of the proposed programme budget, resources are requested for contractual translation and printing, including $1.2 million, before recosting, for special conferences (see para. 26.143).

The Committee recalls, in this connection, that the General Assembly, in paragraph 22 of its resolution 53/208 B, requested the Secretary-General "to continue his efforts, where appropriate, to introduce new technologies such as machine-assisted translation and common terminology databases while ensuring that there are no adverse effects on the quality of documentation and translation". The Committee stresses the importance of the successful implementation of this provision of the resolution, since it should, in the view of the Committee, significantly improve available in-house translation capacity and thus minimize the need for contractual translation. The Committee also encourages departments to employ, when feasible, remote translation.

VII.21. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the total requirement for translation budgeted under the Department of Public Information, including requirements of the United Nations information centres, as well as of the special meetings and conferences, is $560,100 (before recosting). As regards the translators for special conferences, the Secretariat clarified that no translators are sent for special conferences and no translations of Department of Public Information coverage materials, remote or otherwise, are used or undertaken for conference coverage. Press, radio and television coverage is done on the spot in the required languages based on the relevant simultaneous interpretation of statements as they are delivered by delegates. The purpose of Department of Public Information coverage is to generate news stories in the media and news, and delay owing to translation affects the newsworthiness of the news stories. However, some non-news coverage, such as radio and TV features or documentaries, are translated into other languages, but these materials are usually produced after the conference is over.

VII.22. The Advisory Committee sought clarification with regard to the proposed requirements for external printing, which in the view of the Committee seem to be very high. According to the additional information provided to the Committee on request, the total requirements of $1,628,600 for external printing under the Department of Public Information, including the United Nations information centres, are due to the following:

(a) Some items, such as press kit covers, cannot physically be printed internally, as the print shop does not have the required equipment to print them;

(b) Owing to other competing priorities, such as printing of documents for the Security Council and the General Assembly, it is not always possible for the print shop to print Department of Public Information materials in time to meet deadlines;

(c) The printing jobs of the Department of Public Information are complex and require time and skills that are not available in the print shop.

The Advisory Committee's comments on external printing and "in-house" capacity can be found in chapter I above.

VII.23. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 26.69 (e) that a provision of $307,300, reflecting an increase of $97,500, is made for online services provided by LEXIS-NEXIS, NewsEdge and other search requirements. The Committee expresses concern about the sharp increase in resource requirements for online services and requests that efforts be made to reduce the cost.

VII.24. The total regular budget resource requirements for the information services at Headquarters, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Vienna and 63 United Nations information centres are estimated at $46,923,400 before recosting, and their total regular budget staffing requirements are estimated at 65 Professional and 265 General Service posts. As indicated in paragraph 26.130, 18 United Nations information centres out of 63 are fully integrated with UNDP. The Advisory Committee was informed that these integrated information centres were headed by UNDP resident representatives;

in addition, 15 information centres are headed by UNDP resident representatives as acting directors.

VII.25. The Advisory Committee was informed that 2 United Nations information centres (in Paris and Rome) are currently headed by directors at the D-2 level against D-1 posts; 8 information centres (Bonn, Geneva, London, Moscow, New Delhi, Vienna, Washington and Tokyo) are headed by staff at the D-1 level; 11 information centres (Athens, Copenhagen, Harare, Lagos, Madrid, Mexico City, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Fe de Bogota, Sydney and Tunis) are headed at the P-5 level; and 11 (Accra, Buenos Aires, Dakar, Islamabad, Jakarta (against a P-5 post), Lisbon, Ouagadougou, Port of Spain, Prague, Sana'a and Tehran) are headed at the P-4 level. Representatives of the Secretary-General informed the Committee during its consideration of the proposed programme budget that ad hoc administrative measures were used in order to accommodate directors of the two information centres at the D-2 level by means of borrowing available vacant D-2 posts from elsewhere in the Secretariat.

VII.26. The Advisory Committee sought clarification on the criteria for determining levels of posts for information centre directors, and was informed that these posts were subject to classification in accordance with the criteria set out by ICSC; among other factors that are taken into account in determining levels of director's posts in different duty stations are the number of countries to be served by the centre and the level of responsibility for political liaison in addition to normal information functions; also taken into account are matters regarding whether or not the information centre is the main United Nations presence in a particular country and what functions it performs on behalf of the United Nations system in that country. The Committee requests that the criteria for determining the level of heads of United Nations information centres be reviewed and the results submitted in the next proposed programme budget.

VII.27. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 87 of its resolution 52/220 reiterated its request to the Secretary-General in paragraph 11 of its resolution 51/138 B to continue the integration of United Nations information centres with UNDP. The report of the Secretary-General of 7 April 1999 provides an overview of the status of the integration exercise;[20] the Committee notes that one of the problems of the exercise is that "in general, the integrated information centres have a lower level of programme delivery and a narrower range of activities than those which have not been integrated".[21] At the same time the integration with UNDP made it possible for all information centres to be maintained, despite the abolition of a large number of posts during the current biennium, resulting in an overall reduction of 40 per cent since the beginning of the integration exercise.[22]

VII.28. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that omitted in paragraph 26.140 were:

(a) **Financing for Development.** The General Assembly resolution that calls for this conference by 2001 (resolution 53/173 of 15 December 1998) was passed after the Department of Public Information had prepared the special conferences budget reflected in the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001. It is still not clear for the Secretariat what kind of meeting this will be, i.e. a special session of the General Assembly or a world conference, nor is it known what the format, agenda, timing or any other details would be;

(b) **Millennium Assembly.** Financial implications for the promotional activities are included in the special conference budget under section 26; however, at the time of the preparation of the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 it was not known what format the Assembly would take, nor was it known that there would be a Summit. Although the format and length of the Summit has still not been decided, estimates of additional financial implications for coverage based on the current understanding of three or four concurrent round tables of Heads of State or Government and a plenary at the beginning and end, for a period of three or four days starting 6 September 2000, are under preparation.

Part VIII
Common support services

VIII.1. Part VIII of the proposed programme budget covers section 27, Management and central support services, estimated at $460,086,600, or 17.3 per cent of the proposed budget for 2000–2001. The estimate before recosting is $442,115,600, as indicated in table 27.1 of the proposed programme budget, and the estimated requirements represent a resource reduction of $4,182,200, or 0.9 per cent. In addition to the regular budget estimates, extrabudgetary resources for section 27 are estimated at $82,969,900. Table 27.1 provides a distribution of the regular budget estimates among subsections A to G and a breakdown of extrabudgetary resources by source of funding.

VIII.2. As indicated in table 27.3, under section 27 of the proposed programme budget, the total number of posts is 2,106, including 584 posts funded from extrabudgetary resources. The total number of established posts funded by the regular budget is 1,522 as compared to 1,505 in 1998–1999. This represents a net increase of 17 posts in the regular budget (an increase of 27 in the Professional category and above and a decrease of 9 in the General Service category and 1 in other categories). For extrabudgetary posts, there is a net increase of 50 posts, from 534 to 584. The Advisory Committee was informed that as of 30 April 1999 there were 24 Professional and 20 General Service posts vacant.

Section 27A
Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management

VIII.3. The Secretary-General's estimate of $10,974,800, before recosting, for section 27A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 includes a resource reduction of $115,500, or 1 per cent, as compared with appropriation of $11,090,300 for the biennium 1998–1999. As shown in table 27A.1, estimates of extrabudgetary resources amount to $2,657,200 for the biennium 2000–2001 as compared with $2,639,000 estimated for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.4. As indicated in table 27A.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 is 57, representing a decrease of one post as compared with the total of 58 posts for the biennium 1998–1999. With regard to extrabudgetary posts, 15 posts are projected for the biennium 2000–2001; the same number of extrabudgetary posts was estimated for 1998–1999.

VIII.5. The Advisory Committee notes from table 27A.6 and paragraph 27A.18 that a provision of $234,600, before recosting, is requested for 2000–2001 for consultants and experts for management services. The Committee requested and was provided with detailed information on work done by consultants hired so far against the appropriation for the biennium 1998–1999 ($260,800) and proposed consultancy services for 2000–2001.

VIII.6. As indicated in table 27A.9 and paragraphs 27A.28 and 27A.44, a proposal is being made to redeploy one P-5 post to the Oversight Support Unit from the programme support area and to convert to extrabudgetary funding one P-3 post in the Oversight Support Unit. The Committee was informed that the P-3 post is currently vacant and that the reallocation of posts within the Office of the Under-Secretary-General would allow for a more rational use of regular and extrabudgetary resources. The Committee has no objection.

VIII.7. The programme of work for the administration of justice is addressed in paragraphs 27A.34–27A.38. The Advisory Committee recalls that there has been a build-up of backlog cases for the Joint Appeals Board, particularly related to duty stations other than New York, as mentioned in paragraph VIII.2 of its previous report.[1] The Committee requested and was provided with an update of workload statistics for the administration of justice, shown in the table below.

Administration of justice: workload statistics

	1996	*1997*	*1998*
Joint Appeals Board			
Appeals filed[a]	**88**	**82**	**62**
Reports to the Secretary-General	**64**	**47**	**35**
Joint Disciplinary Committee			
Cases received and disposed		**3**	**9**
Panel of Counsel			
New cases		**339**	**239**
Cases assisted/represented by the Coordinator		**174**	**143**
Cases settled by the Coordinator		**110**	**52**
Cases referred to counsel[b]		**172**	**126**
Consultations		**1 073**	**899**
Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances			
Cases	**36**	**12**	**38**

[a] **Including cases for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.**

[b] **Including cases from the previous year.**

VIII.8. The Advisory Committee was informed that as at 28 May 1999, there were 72 cases pending before the Joint Appeals Board at different phases of the proceedings. For some cases, draft introductions have been prepared, but no panels have yet been established; for some others, the final reports have been submitted to the panel members for their approval and signature. Out of the 72, approximately 38 cases are ready to be taken up by the Joint Appeals Board panels for deliberation. They will be priority work in the coming months. As regards the work of the Joint Disciplinary Committee, at present there are two disciplinary cases pending before the Joint Disciplinary Committee; both of them are requests for review of decisions of summary dismissal. The Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances is currently handling 12 cases, and a case takes an average of six to eight months to resolve. The Advisory Committee recalls that the Joint Inspection Unit is preparing a report on the administration of justice in the United Nations Secretariat. The Committee believes that there is a need to examine the workload of all bodies dealing with the administration of justice to determine whether enough resources are allocated to this area.

Section 27B
Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts

VIII.9. As shown in table 27B.1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General's estimated requirements for the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts amounts to $21,526,400 for the biennium 2000–2001 before recosting, reflecting an increase of $638,200, or 3.0 per cent, as compared with the appropriations for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.10. In table 27B.1, the extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $18,724,700, as compared with estimated extrabudgetary resources for 1998–1999 of $17,998,900. Thus, the total estimated resources and requirements for the biennium 2000–2001 would amount to $41,486,600, as compared to total estimates of $38,887,100 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.11. As indicated in table 27B.3, the regular budget post requirements of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts for the biennium 2000–2001 is the same as for the biennium 1998–1999, 116. The number of extrabudgetary posts for 2000–2001 would be 114, reflecting a decrease of two P-3 level posts, as compared to the number of extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1998–1999. As indicated in the footnote to table 27B.3, with the exception of the reduction in the number of P-3 level posts from 10 to 8 financed from the support account for peacekeeping operations for 2000–2001, the same number and level of posts would be required from the support account for the biennium 2000–2001 as for the biennium 1998–1999. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that as of April 1999 there were four vacant Professional posts.

VIII.12. The Advisory Committee recalls that all the posts of the Peacekeeping Financing Division of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts are currently funded from the support account. The Committee requests that the Secretary-General review the mode of financing of these posts, in particular of those relating to management and direction of the Division, and report in the context of the next budget estimates.

VIII.13. As indicated in paragraph 27B.6, the proposed increase of $638,200 in the level of resources for the Office under the regular budget relates essentially to additional requirements for the maintenance and support of Releases 3 and 4 of IMIS. It is estimated that for the biennium 2000–2001 and beyond, four positions (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 General Service) would be required. It is proposed that, in the first instance, these positions be financed from the regular budget through the use of general temporary assistance until the longer term pattern of requirements for continuing maintenance and support of IMIS becomes clearly established. The Advisory Committee recalls that, as indicated in paragraph 27B.6, eight posts in the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts were abolished in the bienniums 1996–1997 and 1998–1999 in anticipation of IMIS releases, and two posts were redeployed to IMIS central maintenance in 1998–1999. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the four positions to be funded from general temporary assistance for core ongoing maintenance of IMIS are different and separate from the 29 IMIS positions recommended for conversion to established posts in section 27D. The Committee is of the view that if the four positions in the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts are required during the biennium 2000–2001 for core maintenance of IMIS they should be approved as temporary posts rather than financed from general temporary assistance (see also chap. I above).

VIII.14. In paragraph 27B.13, the provision of $3,900 is requested for the share of the Controller's office in the maintenance and support of the local area network (LAN) technical infrastructure (including central servers) necessary for the support of central management services such as e-mail, UNIX for IMIS, etc. In this connection, the Committee recalls that in paragraph VIII.27 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] the Committee noted that amounts were included under each section of the budget for the maintenance and support of the LAN technical infrastructure. As the Committee had been informed that there was no well-developed formula for the determination of the amount that each office should contribute to LAN maintenance and support, it recommended that criteria be developed for determination of the LAN infrastructure requirements and costs.

VIII.15. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes from the actions taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee contained at the end of section 27D that a cost-recovery system is being implemented so that traffic by department/office can be measured. On that basis, criteria for LAN infrastructure requirements and costs would be determined under a cost-recovery study currently under way. The Committee was informed that the purchase of personal computers and monitors is now done by departments, and infrastructure costs that cannot be attributed to any department or office are centrally managed by the Information Technology Services Division.

VIII.16. The Advisory Committee was informed that one of the tasks to be carried out in the coming biennium would be a review of the United Nations Financial Rules to see how they could be simplified. Should a review of the United Nations Financial Regulations be required, the Committee was informed that such a proposal would be submitted to the General Assembly.

Section 27C
Office of Human Resources Management

VIII.17. As shown in table 27C.1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General's estimated requirements for the Office of Human Resources Management amount to $46,311,400 before recosting, reflecting a resource growth of $1,635,600, or 3.6 per cent, over the appropriations of $44,675,800 for the biennium 1998–1999. The increase is mainly attributable to the global staff training and development activities (para. 27C.8).

VIII.18. In table 27C.1, extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $4,623,500, as compared with estimated extrabudgetary resources of $5,146,700 for the biennium 1998–1999. Thus, total estimated resources and requirements for the biennium 2000–2001 would amount to $53,463,900, as compared to total estimates of $49,822,500 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.19. As indicated in table 27C.3, for the biennium 2000–2001, the regular budget post requirement for the Office of Human Resources Management is 160, as compared with 163 for the biennium 1998–1999, reflecting the proposed abolition of three General Service posts as a result of reduced workload. The number of extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 2000–2001 would be 23, reflecting a decrease of two Professional-level posts. As indicated in the footnote to table 27C.3, for the biennium 2000–2001, there is a reduction of one P-4 and one P-3 posts in the number of posts financed from the support account for peacekeeping operations. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that as of April 1999 there were two Professional and four General Service posts vacant.

VIII.20. The Advisory Committee notes that an attempt has been made to present shorter and more focused narratives in section 27C in accordance with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee (see table 27C.13). The Committee welcomes, in particular, the overview in section 27C (paras. 27C.1– 27C.9). The Committee requests, nonetheless, that in the future the Secretary-General's programme budget estimates indicate clearly the

priorities for which the resources are being requested in the implementation of policies and other guidelines from the General Assembly. The estimates should also highlight progress made in the implementation of decisions of the General Assembly, including what effect these decisions have had or will have in the management of the human resources of the Organization.

VIII.21. As indicated in paragraph 27C.7, for the biennium 2000–2001, the overall structure of the Office of Human Resources Management will remain the same, comprising three divisions: the Operational Services Division, the Specialist Services Division and the Medical Services Division. The Advisory Committee recommends that, in the future, the budget estimates for Office of Human Resources Management include workload indicators for the operational services, specialist services and medical services of the programme of work of the Office, as well as for the budget component of the Office under training and staff development programmes. This information should be presented in tabular form and contain comparative information for the previous two bienniums. In the view of the Committee, the automation of the operations of the Office should facilitate the provision of this information in a consistent manner.

VIII.22. In paragraph 27C.13 a provision for travel of $281,800 under executive direction and management is requested, reflecting an increase of $95,000 as compared with the appropriation of $186,800 for the biennium 1998–1999; expenditures for 1996–1997 were $26,500 (table 27C.4). In the view of the Advisory Committee, the provision of $281,800 for travel during the biennium 2000–2001 would be excessive. The Committee notes that the increase of $95,000 is attributable to the requirements for the travel of participants to meetings of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee ($267,800). The Committee sought justification for the holding of more than one session per year and was informed that during the past years, there were special sessions of Staff-Management Coordination Committee and inter-sessional meetings, in addition to its annual meetings, resulting in additional travel expenditure not budgeted for. On the basis of expenditure patterns, the additional travel provision in the amount of $95,000 has been proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 to accommodate the additional travel requirements of the participants in the Staff-Management Coordination Committee.

VIII.23. In paragraph 27C.14, under contractual services, a provision of $42,800 is requested for external printing of forms and stationery used by the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee recommends that the forms be printed in house if feasible.

VIII.24. As shown in table 27C.12, provisions for training and staff development programmes would amount to $15,643,400 before recosting, reflecting an increase of $1,443,500 for the biennium 2000–2001, or about 10.1 per cent as compared with the appropriation of $14,199,900 for the biennium 1998–1999. In addition, it is estimated that extrabudgetary resources for 2000–2001 would amount to $358,500, as compared to estimates of extrabudgetary resources for 1998–1999 of $328,900.

VIII.25. The Advisory Committee recalls that resources for training and staff development activities increased by 30 per cent for the biennium 1998–1999 and by 7.2 per cent for the biennium 1996–1997. The Committee notes from paragraph 27C.59 that the training activities proposed for 2000–2001 are the same as those proposed for 1998–1999. In paragraph VIII.49 of its previous report,[1] the Committee pointed out that the budget presentation for training and staff development is not transparent and it is difficult to ascertain the overall amount of resources dedicated to training programmes. The Committee appreciates the importance of training and staff development activities of the Organization but regrets the continued lack of transparency in the presentation of the overall estimates

for training activities for the biennium 2000–2001 and the omission of workload indicators for these activities, which should be in the next proposed programme budget.

VIII.26. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with statistical data on the type of training activities and number of participants for the last and the current bienniums and projections for the biennium 2000–2001, as shown below:

Staff development and training programmes
Performance indicators
(Number of participants)

Programme	*1996–1997 (actual)*	*January 1998–April 1999 (actual)*	*May 1999–December 1999 (projected)*	*2000–2001 (proposed)*
Leadership and management				
Management development (includes people management training and follow-up)	916	570	430	600
General Service development training	0	655	1 500	3 100
Supervisory skills training	117	330	400	400
Collaboration/negotiation skills	604	639	470	950
Gender training	188	254	750	750
Programmes to support performance management and development of specific organizational competencies				750
Total, Leadership and management	**1 825**	**2 448**	**3 550**	**6 550**
Human and financial resources management	**245**	**292**	**478**	**1 300**
Information technology training programme	**13 330**	**9 966**	**6 400**	**16 500**
Language and communications training				
Arabic	764	602	125	650
Chinese	408	344	70	400
English	1 426	1 064	200	1 200
French	3 216	2 508	475	3 100
Russian	734	523	115	650
Spanish	2 206	1 594	315	2 000
Subtotal	**8 754**	**6 635**	**1 300**	**8 000**
Communications skills training	533	642	115	550
Total, Language training	**9 287**	**7 277**	**1 415**	**8 550**

Programme	*1996–1997 (actual)*	*January 1998– April 1999 (actual)*	*May 1999– December 1999 (projected)*	*2000–2001 (proposed)*
Substantive skills development and career support				
Orientation courses for new staff members	**118**	**95**	**50**	**200**
Sabbatical and summer workshop	**23**	**15**	**5**	**30**
Upgrading substantive knowledge and skills	**4 059**	**3 202**	**1 000**	**4 900**
Career support including junior Professional development programmes, career planning workshops, etc.	**329**	**1 166**	**450**	**2 100**
Total, Substantive skills and career support	**4 529**	**4 478**	**1 505**	**7 230**
Total training	**29 216**	**24 461**	**13 348**	**40 130**
Language proficiency examination	**3 863**	**2 497**	**1 000**	**3 000**
Grand total	**33 079**	**26 958**	**14 348**	**43 130**

VIII.27. The Advisory Committee recommends that, for the next proposed programme budget, information be provided in tabular form for Secretariat-wide training programmes for each section of the budget. The Committee requests that resource requirements for staff development and training be clearly presented, supported by workload data, such as indicators on the number of staff trained and to be trained, type of training activities undertaken and to be carried out, actual expenditure for those activities during the previous biennium and estimated expenditures for the present biennium.

VIII.28. In paragraph VIII.59 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] the Advisory Committee recommended that a comprehensive evaluation of all United Nations training programmes be undertaken irrespective of the source of funding. The review was to be carried out in the same manner as that carried out for UNFPA and was to ascertain the cost-effectiveness, relevance and other pertinent objectives of the training programmes undertaken by the Secretariat. The Committee had been concerned with the apparent lack of overall guidelines for the identification of needs for each department, office or programme for which training would enhance skills and increase expertise, the formulation and implementation of training programmes, the identification of trainees, the qualification of trainers and the assessment of the effect of training, including procedures for follow-up.

VIII.29. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the evaluation of training and staff development activities had been carried out in the first few months of 1999 and the report finalized in April 1999. A copy of the report was made available to the Committee. The conclusion of the evaluation was that United Nations training programmes were of high quality, well designed and cost-effective, with delivery of stated objectives achieved at a lower cost than by comparable organizations and training providers. The Committee requests that weaknesses identified in the evaluation should be addressed and reported in the context of the next budget submission. In this connection, special attention should be paid to addressing shortcomings related to the decentralization of training programmes to individual departments and offices. On the basis of the report's findings,

the Committee recommends the increase in the appropriation for training activities requested for the biennium 2000–2001.

VIII.30. As indicated in paragraphs 27C.7 and 27C.19, the Office of Human Resources Management has begun to develop a monitoring capacity and has established in the Operational Services Division a Monitoring and Reporting Unit of two staff members. The Advisory Committee enquired about the time-frame for preparation of guidelines for monitoring delegation of authority, about plans to train those to whom authority is to be delegated and the criteria for determining whether, in the first place capacity exists before a decision is taken to delegate authority. The Committee was informed that no delegation of any of the responsibilities of the Office of Human Resources Management will proceed until well-written and clear guidelines are in place and training of the departmental staff is undertaken as and when required. Prior to further delegation of some of the responsibilities of the Office, the workload statistics of recipient offices will be reviewed to ensure that resources are available to carry out the added responsibilities. In this connection, the Committee reiterates its observation in paragraph VIII.42 of its previous report.[1] that

> "for orderly and efficient functioning and for managers to be held accountable for actions under delegated authority, it is absolutely essential to ensure that what is being delegated is clearly spelled out in writing. Each programme manager must be informed in clear language free of vague and ambiguous terminology. It is also essential to ensure that capacity exists in terms of staff resources to carry out the delegated authority. Finally, the monitoring of implementation of delegated authority should be streamlined so as to avoid excessive reporting and other costly bureaucratic processes".

VIII.31. In paragraphs 27C.5 and 27C.20 to 27C.22, reference is made to automation, streamlining and simplification of administrative procedures, development of human resources information management systems alongside IMIS to complement existing capabilities, and the completion of a global information system on human resources. The Advisory Committee notes, however, that the narrative of section 27C provides no specific information on plans, projects, implementation schedules and related costs. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, in the biennium 2000–2001, the specific automation projects that the Office of Human Resources Management is planning to implement would include continued work on (a) the integration of both Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters for global reporting on the composition of the Secretariat, human resources indicators and management reports on vacancies (half a work-month of programming time); (b) aggregation of a BIG3 database on consultants, retirees, age 60 and above non-retired appointees, associate experts, non-reimbursable loans personnel and interns (one work-month of programming time); (c) external consultants roster functionality (one work-month of programming time); (d) updated IMIS desk procedures on the Intranet; and (e) electronic forms project to make available through the Intranet over 100 forms.

VIII.32. The Advisory Committee remains of the view that, in spite of the many past stated goals to streamline administrative and personnel action process and procedures in human resources management, little progress appears to have been achieved so far. The Committee is aware that procedures to effect transfer of staff between units of the Secretariat, to reclassify posts and to manage vacancies are excessively cumbersome, time consuming and very costly. For example, upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the time it takes to complete recruitment has been reduced from some 400 days to about 300 days, with the goal to reduce the process to no more than 100 days (see also chap. I above). The Committee is of the view that in order to improve efficiency and enhance productivity in United Nations operations urgent steps must be taken to address these issues.

VIII.33. It is the strong conviction of the Advisory Committee that the bulk of the inefficiency that currently inhibits personnel administration and management in the United Nations could be resolved through a comprehensive and coordinated simplification of procedures reinforced by the use of modern technology. For example, coordination, streamlining personnel processes and monitoring of delegated authority are functions that can be performed more efficiently in an automated environment. Automation could lower costs by shortening processing periods and by reducing the enormous desk paper work that currently afflicts United Nations personnel actions and processes. However, to implement an automation programme successfully, key decisions need to be taken to identify the most urgently needed applications. The Committee is of the opinion that rather than the Office of Human Resources Management attempting to accomplish too many initiatives simultaneously, the Office should, within the resources made available, select key priority areas for immediate automation. Such decisions should take full advantage of the opportunities available in IMIS by making the system the central core of the automation strategy of the Office in human resources management, development and reporting.

VIII.34. The Advisory Committee further recommends that plans and related projects for automation be clearly outlined in the next programme budget proposals. These proposals should also include information on the progress achieved during the previous biennium including efficiency and productivity gained as a result of automation.

Section 27D
Office of Central Support Services

VIII.35. As shown in table 27D.1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General's estimated requirements for the Office of Central Support Services amount to $221,254,200 before recosting, reflecting a resource reduction of $5,639,800, or about a 2.4 per cent decrease as compared with the appropriation of $226,894,000 for the biennium 1998–1999. The decrease is mainly attributable to the reduction in resource requirements for IMIS, resulting from its transition from the development to the operational phase, and economies in facilities management, where implementation of cost-saving measures has resulted in cost reductions during the last few years (para. 27D.6).

VIII.36. In table 27D.1, extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $16,966,300, as compared with $16,618,400 for the biennium 1998–1999. Thus, the total estimated for the biennium 2000–2001 would amount to $248,289,300, as compared with a total of $243,512,400 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.37. As indicated in table 27D.3, for the biennium 2000–2001 the total number of regular budget posts for the Office of Central Support Services is 622, as compared with 596 for the biennium 1998–1999, reflecting the proposed conversion to established posts of 29 positions in IMIS, currently financed under general temporary assistance, the redeployment of one P-4 post to the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and the proposed abolition of two General Service posts in the Archives and Records Management Section. The number of extrabudgetary posts projected for the biennium 2000–2001 is 82, reflecting a reduction of four posts as compared with 86 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1998–1999. As indicated in the footnotes to table 27D.3, for the biennium 2000–2001 there is a reduction of four P-3 posts in the number of posts financed from the support account for peacekeeping operations. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that as at April 1999 there were 11 Professional and 2 General Service posts vacant.

Security and safety

VIII.38. For the biennium 2000–2001 provision for security and safety for the protection of persons and property at United Nations Headquarters remains at the level of $26,763,400 before recosting. The proposed increase of $120,000 for travel relates to requirements for the Secretary-General's protection detail and the Deputy Secretary-General's security staff. This proposed increase is offset by a decrease in the same amount in general operating expenses (table 27D.7 and paras. 27D.20 and 27D.22).

VIII.39. The Advisory Committee requests that precise information be included in the next budget submission, indicating the results of the implementation of objectives set out in paragraph 27D.16 of the proposed programme budget. These objectives would include the development of a unified command concept with other United Nations headquarters, regional commissions, funds and programmes and a common service approach to the delivery of security services. Moreover, the Committee believes that the time has come to prepare a comprehensive expert survey of security needs of United Nations facilities and the capacity of the Organization to address them, together with an indication of the related resource requirements. The Committee requests that the report on security needs be submitted to it in the spring of 2000.

VIII.40. With reference to the anti-explosive detection services indicated in paragraph 27D.17, the Advisory Committee requested information on the costs associated with "the capability to respond with an explosive detection canine team". The Committee was informed that the current contract, awarded to the lowest bidder, was signed on 12 April 1999 at an annual cost of $152,000. The contract retains a clause allowing the United Nations to renew it for one year (2000) at the same price. The Committee requests the Secretariat to provide the General Assembly with a justification of the cost-effectiveness of this service.

Information technology services and the Integrated Management Information System

VIII.41. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 27D.5 that "in line with the Secretary-General's vision of the 'electronic United Nations', the information technology strategy for the Organization will be targeted towards establishing adequate infrastructure and investment to support the activities of the United Nations policy makers and the Secretariat, and providing services to Member States through effective operation of the electronic infrastructure". The Committee's comments on this matter may be found in chapter I above.

VIII.42. As shown in tables 27D.9 and 27D.11, provisions for information technology requirements under the Information Technology Services Division and the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) Service amount to $69,876,400 before recosting, reflecting a reduction of $1,319,900, or 1.9 per cent, as compared with the appropriation of $71,196,300 for the biennium 1998–1999. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $3,045,400 for the biennium 2000–2001, as compared with extrabudgetary resource estimates of $2,650,600 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.43. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 27D.28 to 27D.35 and 27D.43 to 27D.51 that resources will be utilized mainly for operational support and maintenance of computer and network infrastructure, new technologies and development services and development and installation of IMIS at offices away from Headquarters. The Committee further notes that, in addition to what is included under section 27D, the cost of upgrading technology infrastructure is included under section 31. In the view of the Committee the budget estimates are not transparent enough. For example, the Committee could not differentiate what resources would be required for maintenance, operational support and infrastructure upgrading and what would be required for investment in new technologies, including research and development. The Committee recommends that in the next budget submission that differentiation be made clearly. The breakdown should be made under each section of the budget, as appropriate. Such information should be accompanied by clearly defined projects under each section of the budget so that the Committee and the General Assembly would be able to assess the appropriate level of resources to be invested in information technology and ascertain, as well, the results and benefits to be gained from such investment (see chap. I above).

VIII.44. The Advisory Committee recalls that in paragraph VIII.78 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999[1] it recommended that IMIS and information technology services be reviewed with the view to establishing one organizational unit. As can be seen from table 27D.6, such a merger has not taken place. However, the Committee notes from paragraph 27D.40 that the issue of establishing a unit in charge of all information technology at the Secretariat will be pursued in the context of setting up a common maintenance service for the United Nations and other participants using IMIS. The Committee requests that progress achieved in this regard be included in the progress report on IMIS to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

VIII.45. The Advisory Committee is aware of the appointment of a new Director of the Information Technology Services Division. The Committee trusts that henceforth, the Division will have the essential expertise to provide policy leadership and guidance to departments and offices away from Headquarters on matters concerning the use of technology and the management of infrastructure for United Nations operations. The Committee commends current efforts to reach agreement between the United Nations Secretariat and other United Nations users of IMIS on maintenance of the system. The Committee will comment further on the matter in the context of the review of the report of the Secretary-General on IMIS.

VIII.46. The Advisory Committee notes from table 27D.21 on follow-up of its previous recommendations that its concerns, as indicated in paragraphs VIII.90 and VIII.98 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] have not been fully addressed. For example, the replies contain no clear information on how quality of service and client satisfaction are being managed and monitored. The Committee recommends that further action that may be taken on the subject of the recommendations of the Committee be reported in the context of the next budget submission.

VIII.47. As indicated in paragraphs 27D.36 and 27D.37, the main areas presently covered by IMIS are "personnel management, post management, accounting, procurement, travel, payroll and budget execution", and "IMIS is now in its final stages of development". The Advisory Committee has already stressed the importance of the availability of remote access to the system and notes that the main activities for the next biennium include the "operationalization of remote access to IMIS, using recent technological innovations made available by the industry". That being the case, the Committee questions the low number of projected users of IMIS for 2000 in the table of significant workload indicators following paragraph 27D.27. The Committee also notes from paragraph 27D.38 that the system is currently used by only some 2000 users worldwide. The Committee is aware that the main areas handled by IMIS are not confined to administrative and executive offices. The Committee recommends that, in the context of the next budget submission, information be provided on the extent to which IMIS is used by programme managers in the management of the activities under their purview.

VIII.48. In paragraph 27D.35, under grants and contributions, a provision of $4,989,600 is requested, reflecting an increase of $1,077,700 as compared with the appropriation of $3,911,900 for the biennium 1998–1999. The provision would cover the cost of use of the mainframe at ICC by Headquarters ($1,589,600) and technical support at Headquarters and Geneva for the operation of the local area network and IMIS operation ($3,400,000).

VIII.49. The Advisory Committee notes that in paragraph 27E.24 (section 27E, Administration, Geneva), $1,444,300 is requested for the share of the United Nations Office at Geneva of the payment to ICC for the operation and maintenance of the mainframe. The Committee sought clarification as to the basis for the calculation of the estimates, the reasons for the increase for the biennium 2000–2001 and the total payment to ICC under the regular budget and sections of the budget under which amounts are budgeted. The Committee was provided with the tabulation shown below and with a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between ICC and the United Nations covering mainframe services provided by ICC to Headquarters, as well as access to its mainframe through Headquarters by offices away from Headquarters. The Memorandum of Understanding is valid for three years and is revised annually to adjust charges on the basis of utilization. Charges for the biennium 2000–2001 may be lower than those listed at present in the Memorandum of Understanding as a result of migration of major applications (UNBIS, payroll) to other platforms. It is also expected that the Pension Fund will enter into its own separate arrangements with ICC for its services. The Committee recommends that similar information be provided for in the next budget estimates.

Grants and contributions related to the International Computing Centre

	1998–1999 appropriation	*2000–2001 total before recosting*	
Section	*(Thousands of United States dollars)*		*Paragraph (A/54/6)*
Section 1	–	1 219.0	1.39c
Section 9	614.8	614.8	9.128
Section 11A	1 821.8	2 076.2	11A.39
Section 18	1 197.4	799.6	Total ECE (see individual subprogrammes)
Section 25	927.6	614.1	25.74
27D	3 911.9	4 989.6	27D.35
27E	1 644.3	1 444.3	27E.24
Total	**10 117.8**	**11 757.6**	

VIII.50. On the subject of the optical disk system (ODS), the Advisory Committee recalls its view, as indicated in paragraphs VIII.110 to VIII.112 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999.[1] The Committee further recalls its report contained in document A/53/507 and the related General Assembly resolution 53/208 C.

VIII.51. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 27D.25 that ODS is expected to be one of the principal vehicles for the dissemination of information of various forms to all users. In paragraph 27D.5 it is indicated that one of the activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat would be to expand the services of ODS for the benefit of Secretariat users, Member States and their permanent missions. The Committee also notes, from the summary of action taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee, that pursuant to

section C of General Assembly resolution 52/214 a proposal to expand the capacity of ODS using new technology is currently being reviewed and $500,000 is requested for software and services for re-engineering ODS (para. 27D.31).

VIII.52. Taking into account the views of the Advisory Committee as expressed in paragraphs VIII.110 and VIII.111 of its previous report[1] and subsequent decisions of the General Assembly, the Committee enquired about measures taken by the Secretariat to enhance the capacity of permanent missions, in particular those of developing countries, to use ODS for document retrieval and distribution. The Committee was informed that the updated number of accounts registered to Member States was 976. Of those, 705 accounts were established for the permanent missions and 271 were established in the capitals of Member States. The Committee was informed that the system was extensively used by the permanent missions, through both direct ISDN connections and the Internet.

VIII.53. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, a long-term application of ODS, Internet and Extranet technology would include establishing in each conference room, where documents are currently held for distribution, computer facilities equipped with high-speed printers. This would obviate the need to stock a large number of documents, with the attendant personnel cost, for distribution to delegates during specific meetings.

VIII.54. The Advisory Committee notes from the table of significant workload indicators following paragraph 27D.27 that it is expected that the number of calls to the help desk in 2000 will reach about 12,000, reflecting an increase of more than 70 per cent since 1997. The Committee sought clarification and additional information on the reasons for the rapid increase, on the current number of staff performing help desk functions for both staff and missions, on what has been contracted out at Headquarters, on the number of staff using computers, on development of software to manage this function, on the installation of central management software (CMS) and its effect on the number of help desk calls and on the availability of CMS in other duty stations.

VIII.55. The Advisory Committee was informed that the current staffing level of the help desk included a help desk manager (United Nations staff), a parts manager (contractor), nine technicians (contractor) and four call dispatchers (contractor). Of those, two technicians are dedicated to the support provided for the permanent missions. In addition to the help desk operation, a contractor provides Web hosting and e-mail maintenance in the server assigned for the permanent missions services. The statistics on the number of calls (see table following para. 27D.27) include those received from permanent missions. The increase in the number of calls received by the help desk reflects greater use of its capacity by clients. Outsourcing has improved the level of service, including responsiveness to clients' calls. Prior to outsourcing, the help desk was severely understaffed. The use of a standard software package installed to assist in the management of the help desk has facilitated the work of technicians responding to problem calls. CMS has narrowed the universe of problems reported to the help desk at Headquarters. CMS is available only at Headquarters, but plans are being developed for its deployment at offices away from Headquarters.

Common services

VIII.56. The Advisory Committee enquired about the progress of the common services project resulting from the proposals of the Secretary-General on reform (A/51/950). The Committee was provided with a summary of the project achievements.

VIII.57. The Advisory Committee notes that the progress achieved so far relates mainly to laying the groundwork for further discussion and negotiation. The Committee cautions, however, that the procedures followed should be streamlined to promote rather than discourage timely agreement on what services should be delivered in common or jointly.

It is the experience of the Committee that too many working groups holding too many meetings and discussing a large variety of subjects might be a recipe for protracted discussions and ultimate failure. Priority should be given to services that are good candidates for common delivery using the criteria of efficiency, productivity and cost-effectiveness. Where it has been determined that these factors have been fulfilled but there is reluctance to proceed, Member States should be informed in order to provide legislative guidance.

VIII.58. The Advisory Committee enquired about the present arrangements concerning printing facilities at New York and Geneva. The Committee was informed that UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA contracted out many of their printing jobs. In this connection, the Committee is disappointed with the results of the working group on printing services. According to the information received, the members of the working group have simply agreed to review and coordinate with respect to local printing facilities. The Committee is of the view that printing is an area that should be given priority in developing common facilities. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General take immediate steps to prepare a comprehensive report for review by the Committee. The report should include information on the total cost of operating all printing facilities at Geneva and New York, the capacity of all the plants and the printing workload of all organizations concerned. Information should also be provided on the printing programme that is contracted out and comparative costs for in-house and external printing. The report should be prepared in time for the Committee to submit its recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

VIII.59. The Advisory Committee, noting that the Joint Inspection Unit has submitted a report on common services at Geneva (A/53/787), urges that comments be available to enable a review of the report by the Committee without further delay.

Procurement, travel and transportation

VIII.60. As indicated in paragraph 27D.52, procurement activities have been reorganized pursuant to resolutions of the General Assembly, the most recent of which are resolutions 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and 52/226 of 31 March 1998. As part of the reform, the procurement and transportation functions have been separated. The Advisory Committee notes that the Procurement Division has now assumed responsibility for procurement activities for the entire Headquarters, including those previously exercised by the former Department for Development Support and Management Services.

VIII.61. The Advisory Committee has requested the Board of Auditors to conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of procurement reform measures (A/53/513, para. 24).

VIII.62. Recalling General Assembly resolution 53/217 on procurement-related arbitration claims, the Advisory Committee, during its consideration of section 27D, requested information on cases arising under the regular budget. The Committee points out that prior to the adoption of Assembly resolution 53/217 it had become aware of a large number of claims submitted under peacekeeping operations. The Committee intends to revert to this issue and submit its comments to the Assembly in the context of its review of the report called for in resolution 53/217 (see also section 8 above).

VIII.63. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 27D.63 and 27D.64 that the reorganization of the Travel and Transportation Service has strengthened the administration of contracts for travel agency services. The Committee requests that the Secretariat continue to pursue the expansion of discount arrangements to include more airlines when feasible and cost-effective. The Committee recommends that information in this regard be included in the next budget estimates.

Facilities management

VIII.64. As indicated in table 27D.17, estimated requirements for facilities management amount to $104,336,900, before recosting, for the biennium 2000–2001, reflecting a decrease of $3,810,500, or 3.5 per cent, as compared with the appropriation of $108,147,400 for the biennium 1998–1999. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $5,573,800 for the biennium 2000–2001 as compared with estimates of $4,787,700 for the biennium 1998–1999. In addition, under section 31, provisions for Headquarters are requested for major maintenance ($10,308,900 before recosting) and for major alterations and improvements ($11,269,400 before recosting) (see table 31.2).

VIII.65. The Advisory Committee was informed that the reductions were projected mainly in general operating expenses ($3,091,300), largely as a result of the introduction of cost-cutting measures, the list of which was provided to the Committee. The Committee commends the Secretariat and encourages a continuation of such efforts.

VIII.66. With regard to rental of premises, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 27D.79(a)(i) that an amount of $23,211,800 would be required for the rental of premises in New York. The Committee requested and was provided with the breakdown of estimates shown in the table below.

VIII.67. The Advisory Committee recalls its comments in paragraph VIII.123 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.[1] The Committee requested that the Secretary-General survey the terms of agreements under which the press and other entities occupied space in buildings owned and rented by the United Nations free of charge or at less than commercial rates, with a view to considering the possibility of charging appropriate rent for such space. The Committee reiterates its request, as there is no evidence that this recommendation has been implemented. The Committee requests that a reply be given to the General Assembly no later than December 1999.

VIII.68. The Advisory Committee requested information on losses of computer equipment at Headquarters for the last 12 months. The information supplied to the Committee indicates that there is a high risk of computer equipment loss at Headquarters. The Secretariat should examine the circumstances under which these losses are occurring and report, in the context of the next budget estimates, on remedial measures taken to eliminate or reduce such losses.

Archives and records management

VIII.69. As regards archives and records management, the Advisory Committee, recalling its views and recommendations in its report,[1] welcomes the measures initiated by the Secretariat to modernize procedures for managing the records and archives of the Organization using new technology. The Committee is pleased to note from paragraph 27D.82 the intention to involve United Nations funds and programmes in this function, including the establishment of a Common Services Archives Research Centre, electronic exchange of harmonized policies and procedures and a records security declassification project.

VIII.70. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 27D.84 that two General Service posts are proposed for abolition as a result of the introduction of archival processing activities using digital technology, and one Professional post is proposed for reclassification from the P-3 to the P-4 level for the head of the Records Information System Unit. The Committee has no objection to these proposals.

Rental of premises, Headquarters

Location	*Gross area (square feet)*	*Base rent*	*Variable element*	*Total rate per square foot (excluding electricity)*	*Cost per year (excluding electricity)*
		(United States dollars at revised 1999 rates)			
1 and 2 United Nations Plaza (25-year lease expires 31 March 2023)	476 322	22.00	1.00	23.00	10 955 406
2 United Nations Plaza (storage) (25-year lease expires 31 March 2023)	8 000	10.00	1.12	11.12	88 960
Park Avenue South (archives)[a] (Lease expires 31 July 2000)	37 500	5.00	8.26	13.26	–
New archives premises[a b] (Proposed lease 1 January 2000 and beyond)	40 000	12.00	0.50	12.50	500 000
FF Building (Lease expires 30 June 2007)	49 000	20.00	2.32	22.32	1 093 680
JFK Airport office[c] (Month-to-month basis)	200	27.60	–	27.60	5 520
Total base year	**611 022**				**12 643 566**
Cost for two years					25 287 132
Add: prorated rental-archives (lease expiring 31 July 2000)[a]					290 063
Less: extrabudgetary funding					3 000 000
Total non-recosted					**22 577 195**
Plus provision for inflation of escalation charges in 2000–2001					634 605
Total 2000–2001 estimate					**23 211 800**
Total 1998–1999 estimate					**23 646 800**

[a] Contract expires 31 July 2000 and will not be renewed; archives will relocate to a new space with an area of 50,000 square feet pursuant to space requirements for the next 20 years. The projection is predicated upon the creation of 10,000 square feet of rent-free research centre space at United Nations Headquarters and approximately 40,000 square feet of additional space at $12 a square foot, which is significantly lower than the suggested requirements. New premises will be at a warehouse type of space outside of Headquarters. Requirements for the biennium include a very minimal $0.50 per square foot provision for escalation charges.

[b] Escalation rate arrived at as follows: tax of $150,000 for 62,000 square feet equals $2.42 per square foot and wage escalation of $276,300 for 62,000 square feet equals $4.46 (total of $6.88 per square foot).

[c] With a projected increase of 10 per cent based on preceding years' rates of increase.

VIII.71. The Advisory Committee urges that every effort be made to agree on modalities for sharing the capital and running cost of the new documentation centre to be established after the expiration of the lease for the Park Avenue South Archives. The Committee further recommends that the experience gained with funds and programmes in the common management of archives and records at Headquarters be extended to Geneva and other duty stations, as appropriate.

Section 27E
Administration, Geneva

VIII.72. As shown in table 27E.1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General's estimated requirements for the Division of Administration of the United Nations Office at Geneva amount to $98,653,700 before recosting, reflecting a resource reduction of $1,199,500 as compared with the appropriation of $99,853,200 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.73. In table 27E.1, extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $14,865,000, as compared with estimated extrabudgetary resources of $14,056,000 for the biennium 1998–1999. Thus, total estimated resources and requirements for the biennium 2000–2001 would amount to $114,536,400, as compared with total estimates of $113,909,200 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.74. As indicated in table 27E.3, for the biennium 2000–2001 the total number of regular budget post requirements for the Division of Administration, Geneva, is 367, as compared with 376 for the biennium 1998–1999, reflecting a reduction of nine posts (1 P-2/1 and 8 General Service). The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 27E.17 and 27E.39 that the proposed abolitions result mainly from increased automation of operations and streamlining of procedures. The Committee agrees with this proposal. Upon request, the Committee was informed that as at April 1999 there were 6 Professional and 14 General Service posts vacant.

VIII.75. The number of extrabudgetary posts financed from reimbursement for support to extrabudgetary administrative structures is projected for the biennium 2000–2001 at 75, reflecting an increase of 2 General Service posts as compared with 73 extrabudgetary posts projected for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.76. The Advisory Committee welcomes the presentation of the estimates for the biennium 2000–2001, which shows the resource requirements of the Division of Administration, Geneva, in four parts, reflecting the current organizational structure of each service and the separate identification of the related resources (para. 27E.2). As shown in table 27E.2, the projected reduction of $1,199,500 is mainly attributable to the reduction in post requirements ($1,380,100) and in grants and contributions ($268,800).

VIII.77. With regard to the Financial and Electronic Resources Management Service, as indicated in tables 27E.7 and 27E.8 and paragraph 27E.17, total requirements for posts ($13,007,400) before recosting reflect reduced requirements of $550,100 in salaries and common staff costs, partly as a result of the combined effect of the abolition of one P-2/1 post in the Electronic Services Section the functions of which have been reclassified at the P-3 level and that would be accommodated through the redeployment of a P-3 post from the Recruitment and Placement Section of the Human Resources Management Service; the abolition of four General Service posts; and the reclassification of one P-3 post to P-4 to supervise client services.

VIII.78. The Advisory Committee notes from table 27E.7 and paragraph 27E.24 that the resources requested under grants and contributions of $1,444,300 for the biennium

2000–2001 would provide for the share of the payment to ICC of the United Nations Office at Geneva, reflecting a reduction of $200,000, or 12.1 per cent, as compared with the appropriation of $1,644,300 for the biennium 1998–1999. The Committee understands that the United Nations Office at Geneva still uses ICC facilities for its payroll, but with the installation of IMIS Release 4, this use will decrease. The Committee recalls that during its examination of UNHCR activities and subsequently during its visit to Geneva in June 1998 (see A/AC.96/900/Add.3, para. 23, and A/53/7, paras. 22 and 23), it was informed that UNHCR had signed an agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO) to use WHO payroll facilities in Geneva for its needs, starting before 2000. Eventually, UNHCR plans to switch to its own system. The United Nations Office at Geneva would continue to provide payroll services to UNHCR for the biennium 1998–1999. During the hearings on section 27E, the Committee sought clarification on the rates demanded by WHO to process the UNHCR payroll and on the timing planned by UNHCR to switch to its own system. The Committee was informed that the rates proposed by WHO would be higher than those incurred by processing the UNHCR payroll on ICC through the United Nations Office at Geneva. Under the circumstances, UNHCR had decided to continue to use the services of the United Nations Office at Geneva for this purpose.

VIII.79. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 27E.25 that a Vacancy Management Unit has been established within the Human Resources Management Service in order to achieve better planning and monitoring of vacancies. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Unit, established effective January 1999, comprises one P-3 and five General Service posts (two of which are financed from extrabudgetary resources). In the Committee's opinion, it is doubtful what the Unit will be able to accomplish in the long term. For example, it is not clear whether the Unit will be needed after the installation of IMIS in 2000. The Committee was informed by the Office of Human Resources Management that, with regard to the new global information system on human resources mentioned in paragraphs 27C.21 and 27C.22, IMIS will be able to track the vacancy situation on a timely basis. That being the case, the Committee believes that there is no need to establish separate units for this task.

VIII.80. As indicated in paragraph 27E.27, the Human Resources Management Service is responsible for staff development and training. However, since staff development and training activities target the staff of all organizational units based in Geneva, those activities and related resources are presented in a separate subprogramme. For the biennium 2000–2001, estimated requirements for staff development and training amount to $3,833,100 before recosting, reflecting an increase of $328,700, or 9.3 per cent, as compared with the appropriation of $3,504,400 for the biennium 1998–1999 (see table 27E.6). The Advisory Committee notes that the resources provided under this subprogramme are in addition to $15,643,400 before recosting presented under section 27C (see table 27C.1).

VIII.81. As shown in paragraph 27E.50, the bulk of the resources ($2,620,800 before recosting) under contractual services for staff development and training relates to salaries and related costs of 15 full-time language teachers ($2,367,300), provision for part-time teachers ($116,900) and training and retraining of staff of the Division of Administration, Geneva ($136,600). The Advisory Committee was informed that the large increase in the provisions under contractual services of $272,000, or 11.5 per cent (see table 27E.13), was to address a persistent deficit in the past in the salaries and related costs of the 15 full-time teachers. It was not clear to the Committee why in the past the cost had been consistently underestimated.

VIII.82. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 27E.47 that during the biennium 2000–2001, the Staff Development and Learning Section of the Human Resources Management Service would continue to provide language courses in the six official languages of the United Nations, to support Secretariat-wide training programmes, including local communications and management training, and to focus on staff development through both the upgrading of substantive skills and the acquisition of new skills. As indicated under section 27C above, the Committee regrets the continued lack of transparency in the presentation of the proposed training estimates under section 27E and the omission of performance indicators for training activities in Geneva.

VIII.83. The Advisory Committee notes that a priority item of the work programme of the Division of Administration, Geneva, is to continue its review of the policy of the United Nations at Geneva and related implementation in respect of reimbursement for services rendered by the United Nations Office at Geneva to other units and agencies at Geneva. In this connection, the Committee points to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on United Nations system common services at Geneva (A/53/787), which is referred to under section 27D above.

VIII.84. As regards the Joint Appeals Board and Joint Disciplinary Committee secretariats, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 27E.28 that efforts will be made to deal effectively with cases filed or lodged during a given year. In this connection, the Committee requested and was provided with information on the workload and backlog statistics for the two bodies, as shown in the table below.

Statistics on administration of justice at Geneva

	1996	*1997*	*1998*
Joint Appeals Board			
Appeals filed	18	24	28
Appeals disposed	23	20	28
Appeals carried over	33	37	37
Appeals without report	3	10	10
Appeals with report	20	10	18
Suspensions of action filed	6	12	4
Joint Disciplinary Committee			
Cases filed	0	3	3
Cases disposed	0	0	5
Cases carried over	0	3	1

VIII.85. As shown in paragraph 27E.33, the estimated requirements for the United Nations share of the use of the Joint Medical Service amount to $2,407,400; this represents about 30.1 per cent of the total budget of the Joint Medical Service. The estimate is based on the approved 1998–1999 budget of the Joint Medical Service, which is administered by WHO. The Committee notes that the Joint Inspection Unit, in its report on United Nations system common services at Geneva (A/53/787), regards the Joint Medical Service as a well-functioning service.

VIII.86. As shown in table 27E.11, estimated requirements for General Services for the biennium 2000–2001 amount to $68,735,900 before recosting, reflecting a decrease of $112,600, or 0.1 per cent, as compared with appropriations of $68,848,500 for the biennium 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 27E.39 that there are three General Service posts proposed for abolition under General Services as a result of the automation of procedures and the outsourcing of some services, which has resulted in a

reduced workload in areas such as registry and mailing, building management and engineering, and procurement and transportation. The Committee has no objection.

VIII.87. In paragraph 27E.40 the provision of $4,028,900 includes $1,694,000 for temporary assistance for meetings, reflecting a reduction of $416,400, or 19.7 per cent, as compared with the amount of $2,110,400 requested for the biennium 1998–1999.[23] The Advisory Committee requested clarification on this matter but it was not provided.

VIII.88. With regard to the implementation of recommendations of oversight bodies and the Advisory Committee shown in table 27E.15, the Committee notes that the reply to its request regarding the presentation of the estimates for medical services is not satisfactory. The Committee reiterates its recommendation.

Section 27F
Administration, Vienna

VIII.89. As shown in table 27F.1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General's estimated requirements for the Division of Administration and Common Services of the United Nations Office at Vienna amount to $29,352,400 before recosting, reflecting a resource reduction of $1,349,000, or about 4.3 per cent, as compared with the appropriation of $30,701,400 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.90. As indicated in paragraph 27F.12, the estimates relate to the services provided by the Division of Administrative and Common Services to the United Nations programmes and organizational units located at the Vienna International Centre in the areas of finance, human resources management and general support services, including information technology and security and safety services, and to the United Nations share of services provided by UNIDO and IAEA. As shown in table 27F.1, the reduction of $1,349,000 in the estimate for the biennium 2000–2001 reflects a reduction of $1,657,000 for support services, partially offset by an increase of $182,000 in the estimate for finance and budget and $126,000 for human resources management.

VIII.91. In table 27F.1, extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $1,868,900, as compared with estimated extrabudgetary resources of $1,843,500 for the biennium 1998–1999. Thus, total estimated resources and requirements for the biennium 2000–2001 would amount to $31,744,600, as compared with total estimates of $32,544,900 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.92. As indicated in table 27F.3, for the biennium 2000–2001, as for the biennium 1998–1999, the total number of regular budget post requirements for the Division of Administrative and Common Services, Vienna, is 86. **The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 27F.29 and 27F.44 that it is proposed to upgrade from the P-3 to the P-4 level the post of the Chief of the Staff Administration Unit in the Human Resources Management Section and from the P-4 to the P-5 level the post of the Chief of the Information Technology Section. The Committee has no objection to these requests. The Committee was informed that as at April 1999 there was one Professional post vacant.**

VIII.93. For the biennium 2000–2001, as for the biennium 1998–1999, no extrabudgetary posts are projected for the Division of Administrative and Common Services, Vienna.

VIII.94. The role and function of the Division of Administrative and Common Services and the arrangement for the provision of joint and/or common services are summarized in paragraphs 27F.2 to 27F.9. **The Advisory Committee believes that Vienna is more advanced in the provision of these services than either New York or Geneva, including the capacity to develop workload performance indicators for determining billing rates for common or joint services. The situation at Vienna has forced the United Nations entities there to provide** a large number of services either jointly or in common; however, the goal of a common service approach should not be an end in itself. It must be arrived at after it has been determined that it is the most cost-effective means of providing the service concerned. To this end there must be effective leadership at the highest executive level possible fortified by clear guidance from the legislative bodies concerned. Vienna is also more advanced than other duty stations in the development of cost indicators for joint and common services. The Committee was provided with the table below containing the estimated shares of organizations for common and joint administrative services in Vienna in the bienniums 1998–1999 and 2000–2001.

VIII.95. In this connection, the Committee was informed that costs charged for services to the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme had not changed for a number of years. The cost recovered is about $1 million. The United Nations Office at Vienna has taken steps to implement the recommendations made by the Board of Auditors in its report[24] to design a basic methodology to account for the administrative services provided to extrabudgetary programmes. Basically this method involves (a) the use of workload statistics and personnel costs to apportion the cost of personnel support and (b) the identification and allocation of non-personnel costs relevant to the substantive programme, such as buildings management. The results of the application of this new methodology should be reflected in the next proposed programme budget.

VIII.96. As indicated in table 27F.10 and paragraphs 27F.48 and 27F.51, the proposed reduction under support services ($1,657,000 before recosting) results mainly from the projected reduction under general operating expenses ($811,400), and the reduction in the United Nations share of jointly financed services ($1,115,400). The Committee was informed that the projected reduction in general operating expenses is based on past experience.

VIII.97. The projected reduction under the United Nations share of jointly financed services ($1,115,400) results mainly from a projected reduction in the estimates for salary costs applied by UNIDO. The Advisory Committee was informed that UNIDO had based the salary cost estimates on actual salary costs rather than on standard costs, as was done previously, with the purpose of making the estimates more precise. The Committee notes that the reduction is also due to the effect of participation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in building management services (see para. 27F.51).

VIII.98. The Advisory Committee recalls its observations contained in paragraphs 66 and 67 of its report (A/53/7) on the estimates budgeted for building management by the United Nations, IAEA and UNIDO. The Committee was informed that the situation described in its report had been rectified. UNIDO continues to be responsible for building management; however, the financial situation of UNIDO is beginning to affect the quality of service in building management. Furthermore, as UNIDO operations downsize, the cost of building management, estimated at $41.7 million for the biennium 2000–2001, will distort the priorities of UNIDO. The Committee recalls that UNIDO building management costs were anticipated to be 21 per cent of the operating costs of the agency, excluding extrabudgetary funds (A/53/7, para. 66). The Committee recommends that consultations be held among all the parties, including the host Government, to identify options for solution.

Cost sharing of administrative services, Vienna, 1998–1999 and 2000–2001 (revised)

Biennium 1998–1999

	Share (percentage)					*Estimated cost (thousands of United States dollars)*				
Common/joint service	*United Nations Office at Vienna*	*IAEA*	*UNIDO*	*Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization*	*Total*	*United Nations Office at Vienna*	*IAEA*	*UNIDO*	*Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization*	*Total*
Services provided by the United Nations Office at Vienna										
Security and safety[a]	23.24	54.46	22.30		100	2 574.6	6 033.2	2 470.5	539.9	11 618.2
Laissez-passer and travel documents	86.02	4.51	4.51	4.96	100	95.4	5.0	5.0	5.5	110.9
Communications[b]	51.00		41.70	7.30	100	1 409.9		1 152.8	201.8	2 764.5
Services provided by UNIDO										
Buildings management[a]	23.24	54.46	22.30		100	8 734.5	20 468.2	8 381.2		37 583.9
Services provided by IAEA										
Medical	21.90	54.04	21.21	2.85	100	454.6	1 122.0	440.3	59.1	2 076.1

Biennium 2000–2001 (at 1998–1999 rates)

	Share (percentage)					Estimated cost (thousands of United States dollars)				
Common/joint service	*United Nations Office at Vienna*	*IAEA*	*UNIDO*	*Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization*	*Total*	*United Nations Office at Vienna*	*IAEA*	*UNIDO*	*Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization*	*Total*
Services provided by the United Nations Office at Vienna										
Security and safety	22.10	51.78	21.20	4.92	100	2 568.0	6 016.9	2 463.4	571.7	11 620.0
Laissez-passer and travel documents	86.02	4.51	4.51	4.96	100	95.4	5.0	5.0	5.5	110.9
Communications[b]	51.00		41.70	7.30	100	1 409.9		1 152.8	201.8	2 764.5
Services provided by UNIDO										
Buildings management	22.10	51.78	21.20	4.92	100	8 077.4	18 925.2	7 748.5	1 798.2	36 549.3
Services provided by IAEA										
Medical	22.80	54.79	17.60	4.81	100	543.9	1 307.2	419.9	114.9	2 385.9

Note: For security and safety services and buildings management, the share of costs is based on office space. For travel documents a fixed rate is charged per document. The cost of communication services is distributed on a workload basis with direct communications charges billed directly to the user organization. For medical services, costs are distributed based on the number of employees, except for medical examinations which are charged to the user organization.

[a] Percentage shares shown for 1998–1999 are calculated based on the total excluding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

[b] Excluding direct communication costs, which are billed to the user organization.

VIII.99. In paragraph 68 of its report (A/53/7), the Advisory Committee commented on the asbestos problem in the Vienna International Centre complex. The Committee sought information on progress made towards a solution. The Committee was informed that discussions had been held with the host Government, and that the Government had declared its readiness to meet the direct costs of dealing with the asbestos problem, on the understanding that the offer excluded responsibility for the costs of any temporary removal of the organizations to other premises. The Government and the organizations at the Vienna International Centre have agreed that dealing with the problem must not involve any health hazard for the staff of the organizations and visitors to the Vienna International Centre. Negotiations with the Austrian authorities will continue, as many aspects related to asbestos removal work remain to be agreed upon (carpet removal, cleaning of surfaces that may have asbestos dust, etc.). The Committee trusts that a satisfactory agreement will be reached with the host Government.

VIII.100. With regard to the Information Technology Section, upon enquiry the Advisory Committee was informed that the Section would provide services to funds and programmes located at Vienna (see paras. 27F.38, 27F.39 and 27F.44). The Committee was informed that as a provider of information services to organizational units in Vienna, including the Office of the Director-General, the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the International Trade Law Branch of the Office of Legal Affairs, the secretariat of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, the United Nations Information Service, the United Nations Postal Administration, and the Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the Information Technology Section has used its central role to standardize software, ensure network growth and stability, provide more timely response, benefit from economies of scale and plan the implementation of efficiency improvements and integration of new systems. The Section is responsible for the network support for IMIS, Releases 3 and 4 of which will be implemented in 1999 and 2000, and the network of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. In the biennium 2000–2001, the Section will provide support for restructuring technical communications with the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention field offices, stabilizing the Office's technical environment and creating a single United Nations Office at Vienna/the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention technical desktop environment. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that there was also an information technology unit in the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention called the Information and EDP Support Unit, with seven staff members, headed at the P-3 level. This Unit maintains specialized applications, including the Office's Web site, a drug and crime database, the Financial Information Management System and the UNIX operating environment.

VIII.101. For the biennium 2000–2001, it is proposed to apportion the cost of technology services provided to all users, including units other than those funded from the regular budget, by introducing an annual fee of $1,100 per personal computer for the network and help desk support. This would also cover the cost of upgrading standard software and hardware. The total cost of the service is estimated at $1,815,700 and would be distributed as follows:

General temporary assistance (help desk)	$551 300
Data-processing services	310 300
Maintenance of office automation equipment	445 700
Hardware and software upgrades	508 400
Total	$1 815 700

VIII.102. The distribution of funding is estimated as follows:

Regular budgets	$616 500
Jointly financed budgets	497 400
Income section (United Nations Postal Administration)	57 200
Extrabudgetary	644 600
Total	$1 815 700

VIII.103. Provision for jointly financed security and safety is estimated at $11,620,000 before recosting, reflecting an increase of $541,700, or 4.8 per cent, as compared with appropriations of $11,078,300 for the biennium 1998–1999. For the biennium 2000–2001, as for the biennium 1998–1999, the resources requested for security and safety are estimated on a net rather than a gross basis. For the biennium 2000–2001, the share of the United Nations in the jointly financed Security and Safety Section is estimated at $2,568,000, or 22.1 per cent of the total requirements of the Section (paras. 27F.51 and 27F.52). The Advisory Committee notes that the provision of the United Nations share for the jointly financed Security and Safety Section is included under grants and contributions in table 27F.10. In order to improve the usefulness of table 27F.10 and other similar tables in various sections of the proposed programme budget, the Committee recommends that footnotes be provided as required to indicate the components of grants and contributions.

VIII.104. In table 27F.12, under extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 1998–1999, estimates amount to $539,900. The Advisory Committee sought clarification as to why no estimates were projected for the biennium 2000–2001. The Committee was informed that the extrabudgetary expenditure of $539,900 for 1998–1999 was the contribution of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to the cost of the service during the biennium. As indicated in paragraph 27F.53, the requirements of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization are being reimbursed as extrabudgetary programme support during 1998–1999 but have been included in the gross budget of common services for 2000–2001.

Section 27G
Administration, Nairobi

VIII.105. As indicated in paragraphs 27G.1 and 27G.2, unlike the administrations in Geneva and Vienna, the administration in Nairobi is funded largely from extrabudgetary resources. The United Nations Office at Nairobi, established in 1996 as a successor to the two separate divisions of administration of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), provides UNEP and Habitat with common administrative and support services, including personnel, financial, general support, security, telecommunications, information technology and conference services. UNEP and Habitat, which are predominately funded from extrabudgetary resources, reimburse the United Nations Office at Nairobi for the services provided. The Advisory Committee notes that, in response to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 "to bring the financial arrangements of the United Nations Office at Nairobi into line with those of similar United Nations administrative offices", the Secretary-General has made a commitment to increase gradually the regular budget component of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, with a view to easing the administrative costs levied on the substantive programmes of UNEP and Habitat.

VIII.106. As shown in table 27G.1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the Secretary-General's estimated requirements for the Division of Administrative Services of the United Nations Office at Nairobi amount to $14,042,700 before recosting, reflecting a resource increase of $1,847,800, or about a 15.1 per cent increase as compared with the appropriation of $12,194,900 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.107. In table 27G.1, extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $23,264,300 as compared with $19,092,100 for the biennium 1998–1999. Thus, total estimated resources and requirements for the biennium 2000–2001 would amount to $39,258,600, as compared to total estimates of $31,287,000 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.108. As indicated in table 27G.3 and paragraph 27G.2, for the biennium 2000–2001, the total number of regular budget post requirements for the Division of Administrative Services, Nairobi, is 114, as compared with 110 for the biennium 1998–1999, reflecting a net increase of 4 posts. These four additional posts under the regular budget will administer areas previously under the responsibility of staff financed from extrabudgetary resources. Two such posts (1 P-5 and 1 P-3) would be deployed to the Financial Resources Management Service and the other two (1 P-4 and 1 P-3) would be deployed to the Human Resources Management Service. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that as at March 1999 there were no vacant Professional or General Service posts.

VIII.109. For the biennium 2000–2001, the number of extrabudgetary posts financed from reimbursement for support to extrabudgetary administrative structures is projected at 275, reflecting an increase of 56 posts (6 Professional and 50 General Service), as compared with 219 extrabudgetary posts projected for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.110. The Advisory Committee notes from table 27G.2 that, for the biennium 2000–2001, $9,961,800, or about 70.9 per cent of the total regular budget estimate ($14,042,700), would be to cover staff costs; however, $19,677,400, or about 84.6 per cent, of the total estimate for extrabudgetary resources ($23,264,300), would be for staff costs. In the opinion of the Committee, it would appear that extrabudgetary resources have been overestimated and that there may be a risk of establishing more posts and recruiting more staff than can be funded from extrabudgetary resources.

VIII.111. The Advisory Committee requested clarification of the amounts requested by the United Nations Office at Nairobi from UNEP and Habitat and the amounts authorized by the Governing Council of UNEP and the Commission on Human Settlements for the Office, but the information was not provided. The Committee recalls that the total recosted extrabudgetary resource requirements of the United Nations Office at Nairobi's administration in 2000–2001 was $14,864,700.[25] The Executive Director had proposed the apportionment of the amount of $14,864,700, as follows: $12,396,000 from UNEP resources and $2,468,600 from Habitat resources. On the basis of its examination of the budgets of UNEP and Habitat, the Committee concluded that there was currently no agreed procedure for determining the total cost of the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the rates for reimbursement of services rendered to other organizations at Nairobi. The Committee requests that the United Nations, UNEP and Habitat establish a mechanism for determining the costs of the United Nations Office at Nairobi and how they should be apportioned. In this exercise the relevant experience in other duty stations, such as Vienna, where the United Nations shares costs with other programmes and/or agencies should be considered. A uniform presentation of these costs should be established prior to the submission of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002–2003 and the related budgets of UNEP and Habitat.

VIII.112. As shown in table 27G.16, for the biennium 2000–2001 resource requirements for conference services are estimated at $1,697,600 before recosting, reflecting no change as compared with the appropriation for the biennium 1998–1999. In addition, extrabudgetary resources are projected at $8,648,900 for the biennium 2000–2001, as compared with the estimate of $8,567,400 for the biennium 1998–1999. Thus, total resources for conference services would amount to $10,560,500 for the biennium 2000–2001, as compared with total resource estimates of $10,265,000 for the biennium 1998–1999.

VIII.113. Table 27G.17 shows that, for the biennium 2000–2001, as for the biennium 1998–1999, the total number of established posts would be 20, and the number of posts funded from extrabudgetary resources would increase by 2, from 79 to 81. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the information provided in paragraphs 27G.41 to 27G.43 does not explain or justify the estimates. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the projection of $8.6 million in extrabudgetary funding was principally from the convention secretariats.

VIII.114. As indicated in paragraph 27G.41, with the transfer of UNEP Conference Services to the United Nations Office at Nairobi Division of Administrative Services, the United Nations Office at Nairobi is responsible for the planning, coordination, and servicing of meetings and the translation, reproduction and distribution of documents. UNEP and its associated organizations, including the convention secretariats and Habitat, are the recipients of United Nations Office at Nairobi conference services. "The services provided are primarily financed from resources made available by substantive users on a charge-back basis".

VIII.115. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that because of the charge-back procedure, conference services for the Governing Council of UNEP and for the Commission on Human Settlements that are funded from the regular budget are not included under the United Nations Office at Nairobi but are presented separately under sections 12 and 13 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. Under policy-making organs, table 12.4 shows a provision of $1,281,800 before recosting for the UNEP Governing Council, and table 13.4 shows an estimate of $1,073,900 before recosting for the Commission on Human Settlements.

VIII.116. Recalling its comments in its previous report (paras. VIII.12, VIII.13 and VIII.187),[1] the Advisory Committee requested and was provided with a detailed description of the charge-back procedure. In general, the procedure calls for Conference Services to prepare annual unit price estimates on the basis of overall cost statistics from the two previous years for services provided to clients, including meeting servicing, translation and reproduction and printing. Staff costs and programme support components are apportioned among the main areas of its operations. On the basis of these unit costs, Conference Services prepares a budget based on the requirement of clients that have requested services. Upon certification of availability of funds by the client, Conference Services does the preparatory work for the meeting. Upon completion of the event, Conference Services issues an invoice to the client organization based on the actual work done and the expenses incurred.

VIII.117. The representative of the Director-General informed the Advisory Committee that because of the charge-back procedure, the United Nations Office at Nairobi could not be certain of the exact level of conference services the Office would be requested to deliver. In the Committee's opinion, this uncertainty would also affect the level of funding. There is also a potential risk of the Office establishing a conference infrastructure in anticipation of conference workload that might not be realized.

VIII.118. Taking into account its view as stated above and its observations made in paragraphs VIII.12, VIII.13 and VIII.187 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999,[1] the Advisory Committee has requested that in its next audit of the regular budget for the biennium 1998–1999, the Board of Auditors pay particular attention to the efficiency of the charge-back arrangements at Nairobi.

Part IX
Internal oversight

Section 28
Internal oversight

IX.1. As indicated in tables 28.1S and 28.2 of the proposed programme budget, the total level of resources requested is $18,885,000 before recosting, reflecting a net increase of $943,500, or 5.3 per cent over the previous biennium. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 28.6 that the percentage distribution of resources does not reflect a separate percentage for programme support since this has been included in executive direction and management (see chap. I above).

IX.2. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $10,948,500, as indicated in tables 28.1 and 28.2. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 28.5 that extrabudgetary resources would provide for oversight services, including investigation of the United Nations funds and programmes.

IX.3. As shown in table 28.3, the number of regular budget posts proposed for 2000–2001 is 87, as compared with 82 for 1998–1999. Extrabudgetary posts would increase by 6, from 34 to 40.

IX.4. The Advisory Committee notes that in investigation cases such as those concerning UNHCR and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, there is a memorandum of understanding covering cost arrangements for services provided by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. No such clear guidelines exist with respect to funds and programmes such as UNDP and UNICEF. On enquiry, the Committee was informed by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services that travel and subsistence is paid for by UNDP and UNICEF whenever the Office provides investigation services. The Committee requests that additional information be included in the next proposed programme budget on cost reimbursement for services to funds and programmes where there is currently no memorandum of understanding similar to the arrangements that exist between the Office and those entities mentioned in the footnotes to table 28.3.

IX.5. The Advisory Committee notes that the increase in the estimates relates to the request for five additional posts (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 2 General Service) and the reclassification of a P-5 post of Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General to the D-1 level. On enquiry, the Committee was informed that the upgrade of the post was requested in part because, since the Office operates without a deputy, the Special Assistant carries significant responsibilities with respect to the four unit chiefs, one of whom is at the D-2 level. The Committee is not convinced by this explanation and recommends against the reclassification. With regard to the additional P-5 post for a Planning and Compliance Officer in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, on enquiry the Committee was informed that until June 1998, the planning and compliance functions to be assumed by this post had been carried out by a gratis personnel at the P-4/3 level (see para. IX.7 of the Committee's previous report).[1] The Committee recommends that the post be provided at the P-4 level.

IX.6. As indicated in paragraph 28.48 of the proposed programme budget, the additional P-4 and P-3 posts that have been requested are for subprogramme 2, Audit and management consulting. The Advisory Committee was informed that the P-4 post would provide expertise related to electronic data processing and information technology audit requirements at Headquarters, while the P-3 post would be situated in the Audit and Management Consulting Division of the African section of the Nairobi office, to enable that Section to increase its audit coverage of United Nations activities in Africa. The two General Service posts have been requested for the Administrative Unit in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and for subprogramme 2, Audit and management consulting. The Committee recommends acceptance of the requests.

IX.7. The Advisory Committee recalls its observations in paragraph IX.13 of its report,[1] where it had expressed the belief that the structure for the Office of Internal Oversight Services should not become too elaborate and that procedures should be in place for the coordination of the various units with a view to promoting greater efficiency. On enquiry, the Committee was informed by the Under-Secretary-General that there had been an increased effort to coordinate the work of the various subprogrammes. The Committee welcomes and encourages the continuation of these efforts. The Committee further recommends that the functional and operational utility of merging the Central Evaluation Unit with the Central Monitoring and Inspection Unit be reviewed. The Committee was informed by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services that such a merger could not be ruled out.

IX.8. The Advisory Committee notes the decrease in resources for evaluation for the last two bienniums. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General review the adequacy of resources for evaluation with reference to workload indicators.

IX.9. The Advisory Committee enquired as to some of the "pervasive management control weaknesses" that are referred to in paragraph 28.40 of the proposed programme budget. The Committee was informed that the Office of Internal Oversight Services had identified the following areas of weakness, including weak internal controls, accountability not properly defined, insufficient delegation of authority, insufficient guidance from Headquarters to the field, lessons learned not properly utilized and weak document management leading to lack of institutional memory.

IX.10. The Advisory Committee requested additional information on recoveries made by the Investigations Section and was informed that as a result of findings and recommendations made by the Section since its inception in November 1994 to date, recoveries or savings had been made in 18 cases. These did not include individual recoveries of less than $5,000.

Part X
Jointly financed administrative activities and special expenses

X.1. The Secretary-General's estimate for part X, Jointly financed administrative activities and special expenses, amounts to $62,340,200, comprising $8,451,800 for jointly financed administrative activities (section 29) and $53,888,400 for special expenses (section 30).

Section 29
Jointly financed administrative activities

X.2. Provisions under this section are requested for five bodies of the United Nations financed on an inter-agency basis:

(a) The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and its secretariat;

(b) The Joint Inspection Unit and its secretariat;

(c) The United Nations share in the budget of the secretariats of the subsidiary bodies of the Administrative Committee on Coordination: the Information Systems Coordination Committee, the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions.

X.3. The indicative shares of participating organizations in the costs of the jointly financed bodies are reviewed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination. Under the formula utilized, the costs of ICSC and the secretariats of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions and the Information Systems Coordination Committee are apportioned each biennium on the basis of the number of staff of each organization with fixed-term or longer contracts at the close of the preceding biennium. The costs of the Joint Inspection Unit and the secretariat of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions are apportioned on the basis of expenditure, excluding that related to peacekeeping, expenditure in kind and 50 per cent of the expenditure of ITC corresponding to the WTO share. The Advisory Committee was provided with the indicative shares for the biennium 1998–1999, based on end-of-1996 staffing data, used in calculating the costs contained in the budget proposal. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that during the latest Administrative Committee on Coordination review of the indicative shares, UNICEF pointed out an error in its figures, requesting a review and correction of the table under consideration at the time, based on 1997 staffing data. Pending this review, the Administrative Committee on Coordination decided to continue interim billing of organizations on the basis of the shares provided in the table below.

X.4. The Advisory Committee recommends that in the next budget estimates, the full cost be given for each of the entities included in the section. For example, paragraph 29.75 indicates that the full cost of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions is not revealed in the estimates. The other support for servicing the regular session of the Committee and the cost of accommodation in Geneva should be disclosed in the budget estimate. For the comments of the Committee on the full cost of the Administrative Committee on Coordination machinery, see chapter I and part IV, section 9 above.

X.5. The Advisory Committee notes from table 29.1 that the United Nations share of costs in the budgets of the jointly financed bodies reflects an increase of $2,349,400 before recosting compared with the 1998–1999 appropriation. As indicated in paragraphs 29.3 to 29.5, the increase results from the reincorporation of UNHCR and UNRWA shares, excluded in the past two bienniums. The Committee notes that prior to 1996–1997, the share of both agencies had been incorporated into the United Nations share of the costs. However, starting with the biennium 1996–1997, the requirements were not included by the Secretariat on the assumption that the agencies would assume responsibility for the costs without specific authority from the General Assembly or the agencies involved. Moreover, the Committee notes that neither agency has ever agreed with the changes in the arrangements or agreed to bear the financial responsibility for those costs. The Committee was further informed that the exact amount of the UNRWA/UNHCR shares in the costs of the jointly financed bodies for 1996–1997 and 1998–1999 was as shown in the table below.

Percentage shares of participating organizations in the costs of jointly financed bodies during the biennium 1998–1999

	International Civil Service Commission[a]	*Joint Inspection Unit*	*Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions*	*Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions*[a]	*Information Systems Coordination Committee*[a]
United Nations[b]	28.28	19.95	19.95	28.28	27.00
UNRWA[c]	0.26	2.60	2.60	0.26	0.25
UNHCR[c]	8.25	11.25	11.25	8.25	7.88
UNICEF	8.79	9.79	9.79	8.79	8.39
UNDP[d]	9.00	12.84	12.84	9.00	8.59
UNFPA	1.78	2.78	2.78	1.78	1.70
WFP	3.16	8.54	8.54	3.16	3.02
ILO	4.89	3.97	3.97	4.89	4.67
FAO	8.22	6.20	6.20	8.22	7.85
UNESCO	4.96	4.04	4.04	4.96	4.73
ICAO	1.60	1.21	1.21	1.60	1.52
WHO	9.14	7.65	7.65	9.14	8.73
IMF	–	–	–	–	4.54
UPU	0.33	0.26	0.26	0.33	0.32
ITU	1.43	1.42	1.42	1.43	1.37
WMO	0.54	0.56	0.56	0.54	0.52
IMO	0.63	0.40	0.40	0.63	0.60
WIPO	1.20	1.14	1.14	1.20	1.14
IFAD	0.59	–	–	0.59	0.56
UNIDO	1.96	1.95	1.95	1.96	1.87
IAEA	4.03	3.46	3.46	4.03	3.85
WTO	0.96	–	–	0.96	0.92
Total[e]	**100.00**	**100.01**	**100.01**	**100.00**	**100.02**

[a] Shares for ICSC, the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions and the Information Systems Coordination Committee are based on end-1996 staffing data (see ACC/1998/PER/R.9, table 1A).

[b] United Nations figures include ICSC, the International Court of Justice, UNU, UNEP, Habitat, ITC and UNITAR.

[c] Figures previously included in United Nations totals. The share hitherto attributed to the United Nations to be apportioned between the United Nations and UNHCR, UNRWA in a manner to be determined between them.

[d] UNDP figures exclude the United Nations Office for Project Services, which is reported separately.

[e] Totals of individual columns do not always add up to 100 because of rounding.

	Biennium			
	1996–1997		*1998–1999*	
Body	*UNHCR*	*UNRWA*	*UNHCR*	*UNRWA*
International Civil Service Commission	566 872	29 433	883 650	28 915
Joint Inspection Unit	987 854	267 938	1 115 638	241 631
Information Systems Coordination Committee	84 887	4 390	109 641	3 609
Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions	94 962	4 930	118 901	3 890
Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions	105 371	28 580	115 679	25 054
Total	**1 839 946**	**335 271**	**2 343 509**	**303 099**

X.6. The Advisory Committee cautions against any tendency to take unilateral actions on matters involving the United Nations or any other organization of the system without full consultation of the parties concerned and/or without informing the General Assembly, as appropriate. Since the previous action was never approved by the Assembly and pending a review of the Secretary-General's proposals, the Committee recommends that the amount accumulated for 1996–1997 be absorbed in the context of the liquidation of prior commitments for that period, and that arrangements be reviewed, for the amount for 1998–1999, in the context of the second performance report.

A. International Civil Service Commission

X.7. As can be seen from table 29.3, ICSC expenditures for the biennium 2000–2001 are estimated at $11,627,100 before recosting, showing resource growth of $291,100 as compared with the appropriation for 1998–1999. The proposed number of established regular posts at ICSC remains at 44 (20 Professional and 24 General Service).

X.8. The Advisory Committee notes that the increase of $291,100 is the net result of an increase of $600,000 under consultants and experts and reductions of $300,000 under general operating expenses and of $8,900 under travel. As indicated in paragraph 29.24 (a), the increase under consultants and experts, from $256,100 to $856,100 before recosting, is related to the development of a computerized integrated management information system as recommended by the Board of Auditors (see A/52/811). The Committee was informed upon enquiry that overall development costs for the project had been estimated by a consulting firm at approximately $2 million, requiring five additional Professional posts and three to four years for implementation. The Committee notes, however, that a phased approach has been chosen and that an initial cost of $600,000 is proposed in the budget estimates for the biennium 2000–2001. The Committee also notes that the Board of Auditors, in paragraph 129 of its report, while recommending introduction of such system indicated that the system "should be compatible with the computer systems in the organizations of the common system and its introduction should be preceded by identification and quantification of savings in terms of reduced staff and other costs that would be effected as a result of automation". The Committee was informed by the representatives of the Commission that it would be possible to provide such information only after the design and development of the system had been completed. The Committee is of the opinion that this should be reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002–2003.

X.9. As indicated in paragraph 29.31, the United Nations share in the total budget of ICSC before recosting would be $4,277,700. The increase of $1,020,900, as explained therein, is largely attributable to the fact that the United Nations share of the costs would include the related shares of UNHCR and UNRWA, as indicated in paragraph X.5 above.

B. Joint Inspection Unit

X.10. Table 29.6 shows that the estimate for the Joint Inspection Unit for 2000–2001 amounts to $7,863,100 before recosting, which is unchanged from the biennium 1998–1999.

X.11. The Advisory Committee notes from table 29.7 that the proposed number of established regular posts for the Joint Inspection Unit is maintained at 19 (10 Professional and 9 General Service).

X.12. As indicated in paragraph 29.44, the United Nations share in the total budget of the Joint Inspection Unit, before recosting, would be approximately 33.80 per cent, or $2,657,800. The increase of $1,012,000 compared with the biennium 1998–1999 is attributable to the fact that the United Nations share in the costs of the Unit would incorporate the related shares of UNHCR and UNRWA.

C. Information Systems Coordination Committee

X.13. As indicated in paragraph 29.47, the proposals of the Information Systems Coordination Committee were reviewed by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) in February 1999. The total budget of the Information Systems Coordination Committee for 2000–2001 amounts to $1,304,700 before recosting and, based on the 1998–1999 cost-sharing formula, the United Nations share amounts to 35.13 per cent, or $458,300 (see para. 29.56).

X.14. The effectiveness of this Committee is not apparent to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee has seen little coordination in the development of systems throughout the United Nations, and believes that this is an area that requires special attention. The Advisory Committee notes that the work programme of the Coordinating Committee involves four interest groups, on document and archive systems, Internet technologies, library support and information service, and telecommunications. In addition, there will be two subprogrammes, one on opportunities for inter-agency cooperation and the other on management of the ICSC secretariat. The Advisory Committee notes that to carry out this work, staff resources proposed cover one D-1 post for the Secretary of the Committee and one General Service post. In addition, the provision for consultants and experts increases from the $197,600, appropriated for 1998–1999 to $584,400, before recosting for 2000–2001.

X.15. As indicated in paragraph 29.56, the United Nations share before recosting amounts to 35.13 per cent, or $458,300. It incorporates the related shares of UNHCR and UNRWA, accounting for the increase of $100,800 over the biennium 1998–1999.

X.16. In view of the comments made in paragraph X.14 above, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the role and future of the Information Systems Coordination Committee should be reviewed and options such as assigning some of its functions to ICC or the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions should be examined. Moreover, pending the outcome of such a review, the Advisory Committee recommends against the appropriation of the United Nations share. Furthermore, should it be concluded that the Committee has a useful role, it could perform a study on ways and means of establishing maintenance standards for LANs, hardware and software in the United Nations system.

D. Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions

X.17. The proposed budget for the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions for 2000–2001, reviewed by that Committee in February 1999, amounts to $1,366,000 before recosting. The United Nations share, at the 1998–1999 rates, amounts to 36.79 per cent, or $502,600 (para. 29.70). It incorporates the related shares of UNHCR and UNRWA, accounting for the increase of $110,100 over the biennium 1998–1999. The provision for staff resources covers two D-1, one P-5 and two General Service posts.

E. Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions

X.18. Resources requested for the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions for 2000–2001 amount to $820,100 before recosting. Staff resources include two Professional posts (1 D-1, and 1 P-4/3) and one General Service post. The Committee notes, as indicated in paragraph 29.85, that the United Nations share amounts to $277,200 before recosting (33.80 per cent). The increase of $105,600 is related to the incorporation of the shares of UNHCR and UNRWA.

Section 30
Special expenses

X.19. The Secretary-General's estimate for section 30, Special expenses, for 2000–2001 amounts to $49,619,800 before recosting, reflecting a resource decrease of $3,064,500. The Advisory Committee notes that this decrease is mostly attributable to after-service health insurance, bank charges and inter-organizational security measures.

X.20. As shown in table 30.3 of the proposed programme budget, the estimated requirements for after-service health insurance amount to $44,277,600 before recosting. The decrease of $2,539,300 compared with the biennium 1998–1999 results from the delayed impact on the estimated level of resources for 2000–2001 of the reduced membership growth and premium subsidy experienced during 1998–1999, as indicated in paragraph 30.5 of the proposed programme budget and anticipated in paragraph X.23 of the previous report of the Advisory Committee.[1] However, the Committee notes, as indicated in the same paragraph, that this situation is not expected to continue since enrolment will grow exponentially as an increasing number of staff members reach retirement age and premium costs rise along with medical costs.

X.21. The Advisory Committee, in its prior report (para. X.25),[1] also recommended that the "long-term implications and impact of this growth upon the Organization" be addressed by the Secretary-General, on a system-wide basis, along with practical indications of how the Secretariat intends to address the issue. The response, provided by the Secretariat in table 30.11, indicates that "the question of liabilities for post-retirement health insurance is currently under consideration by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions)". However, the Committee understands that the involvement of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions is from the accounting point of view only. The Committee recommends, therefore, that urgent attention be given to this matter in full, as indicated in paragraph X.25 of its previous report.

X.22. The Advisory Committee enquired in regard to information circular ST/IC/1999/41, which indicated that staff members and retirees meeting certain eligibility criteria would receive a two-month premium rebate as a result of favourable claims experience of the Aetna and Blue Cross plans in recent years, resulting in the accumulation of surplus funds. The Committee was informed that organizational budgets would receive a credit in the amount of the organizational subsidy. Moreover, since at Headquarters the organization subsidy amounts to two thirds of the aggregate premium cost for health insurance, the rebate

programme would mean that two thirds of the total distribution would credit the budgets of the United Nations, UNDP, and UNICEF.

X.23. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its decision 51/468 B of 13 June 1997, called upon the Office of Internal Oversight Services to conduct an audit covering all United Nations insurance programmes. The report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on this matter is contained in document A/53/467. In this regard, the Committee requests that the Secretary-General provide information in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2002–2003 on the impact of the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and that he inform the General Assembly should any of those recommendations require a policy decision.

X.24. Table 30.6, on bank charges, shows a decrease of $446,200 (or 39.4 per cent) in the resources proposed for 2000–2001 from the appropriated amount of $1,131,100 in 1998–1999. In its previous report,[1] the Advisory Committee, in the context of the budget for 1998–1999, requested the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to secure reduced bank charges (para. X.27). The Committee commends the Secretariat for the measures taken to reduce those charges and to increase income from earnings, as seen in income section 2 of the proposed programme budget (para. IS2.3).

X.25. As shown in table 30.7, the estimates for inter-organizational security measures amount to $1,808,000, including extrabudgetary resources of $853,600. The United Nations share amounts to $908,700 before recosting, an increase of $79,000 over the 1998–1999 appropriation.

X.26. The role of the United Nations Security Coordinator is described in paragraph 30.15. The Advisory Committee notes that, among the functions carried out, the Security Coordinator formulates detailed security and safety recommendations for staff and eligible family members for the entire United Nations system. He or she is also responsible for coordinating, planning and implementing inter-agency security and safety programmes.

X.27. The Advisory Committee recommends that, in the context of the next proposed programme budget, detailed information be submitted to it on all safety and security programmes currently undertaken by the United Nations system, including the mode of financing these programmes and activities. Full information on all staff and other resources should also be provided. In the meantime, the Committee strongly urges the organizations of the United Nations system to carefully coordinate their security and safety activities at the field level. This would avoid the potential for a conflict in policy, activities and guidelines that might endanger the security and safety of United Nations personnel and family members.

Part XI
Capital expenditures

Section 31
Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance

XI.1. Part XI of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 covers section 31, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance, for which an estimate of $45,653,700 is proposed. No extrabudgetary resources are included in this part of the proposed programme budget.

XI.2. Resource requirements under section 31 of $43,127,600 before recosting reflect a net resource growth of $8,954,500, or 26.2 per cent compared with the 1998–1999 appropriations. The total of $43,127,600 comprises resource requirements for the following two programmes: (a) alteration and improvement ($22,095,000) and (b) major maintenance ($21,032,600). The net growth of $8,954,500 reflects a combined effect of growth of $8,028,700 under the alteration and improvement programme and $925,800 under the major maintenance programme.

XI.3. In connection with the presentation, the Advisory Committee notes that the structure of the narratives for the duty stations is not consistent. For example, under the New York presentation, paragraph 31.10 (b), $3.6 million is requested for conference services operations. But no similar separate presentation is made for Geneva or other duty stations. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that in future, a consistent presentation of the estimate under this section be followed. For example, resources for investment in technology infrastructure under each duty station should be identified and presented separately (see chap. I above). The use of terminology should also be consistent. For example, under alterations and improvement at Geneva (para. 31.11 (c)), $3.4 million is requested for "technical installations"; no such classification is shown under alteration and improvement for New York.

XI.4. In examining the request in section 31, the Advisory Committee bore in mind what it had submitted in its previous report,[1] in particular, paragraph XI.9. The Committee reiterates its view that the recurring practice of deferring maintenance and improvement projects will in the long term be very costly to the Organization. The Committee points out that the proposed requirements of $45.7 million, after recosting, for alteration, improvement and major maintenance, are less, than the amount of $46.4 million after recosting requested in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996–1997, before the arbitrary reductions made subsequently. The Committee expresses its concern on the serious state of buildings and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that funds appropriated for maintenance are actually expended for that purpose.

XI.5. With regard to the format of section 31, the Advisory Committee requests that future budget submissions indicate the scope, duration and full (that is, multi-year) cost of any multi-year phased projects undertaking under both alterations and improvements and major maintenance.

XI.6. As can be seen from paragraph 31.8, the Office of Central Support Services has developed a master plan for capital improvements, but the estimates under section 31 "do not include those required for the capital improvements identified under the capital master plan". The Advisory Committee requests that the master plan, including information on the 10-year plan on improvements, be presented to the General Assembly through the Committee by the end of 1999.

XI.7. With regard to the review of the Agreement on the Common Fund for Financing Major Repairs at the Vienna International Centre, the Committee notes from paragraph 31.25 that "the next review and possible revision is due in 2001".

XI.8. In connection with the buildings at ESCAP, the amount of $2.7 million is requested for major maintenance. The Advisory Committee sought additional information regarding the incident related to the collapse of a ceiling section of the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. The Committee was informed that the collapse involved 324 square metres. The Committee was further informed that under the 10-year warranty, the original contractor, while not formally admitting liability, has undertaken to make all repairs at no cost to the United Nations, "including ancillary works and damages". However, the Committee was informed that the United Nations has had to pay the equivalent of $2,150 for an independent consultant. The Committee was also informed that since the collapse occurred in an external portion of the Conference Centre adjacent to the garden area, the

Conference Centre and its operations have proceeded normally and, consequently, no extra costs have been incurred or revenue lost as a result of the accident. In addition, no overtime for ESCAP staff above and beyond normal schedules has been required.

Part XII
Staff assessment

Section 32
Staff assessment

XII.1. As indicated in paragraph 32.1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, the salary and related emoluments of United Nations staff members are subject to the assessment in regulation 3.3 of the Staff Regulations of the United Nations and amendments thereto. The Committee notes that, for the purpose of comparability with the work programme and budget proposals of other organizations of the United Nations system, the Secretary-General has estimated the staff costs net of staff assessment under the various expenditure sections of the proposed programme budget. The difference between gross and net salaries amounts to $322,199,300 after recosting for 2000–2001, and that amount is requested by the Secretary-General as a global amount under expenditure section 32.

XII.2. The Committee notes that, in accordance with the current budgetary procedure of the United Nations, amounts withheld in the form of staff assessment are considered as revenue to the Organization. Accordingly, the amount of $322,199,300 requested under section 32 is reflected in income section 1, Income from staff assessment, which also includes staff assessment from staff charged to revenue-producing activities, as indicated in paragraph IS1.1.

Part XIII
Development Account

Section 33
Development Account

XIII.1. As indicated in paragraphs 33.1 and 33.4, the estimate proposed for the Development Account for the biennium 2000–2001 represents the amount authorized by the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/221 A of 22 December 1997 for the biennium 1998–1999, namely $13,065,000. The Secretary-General is expected to submit a list of projects to be funded from this amount to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

XIII.2. The Advisory Committee notes, however, that the General Assembly has yet to agree on the modalities for operating the Account. Should such agreement not be reached, the Assembly will have to decide on the treatment of the $13,065,000. The Committee also notes that, in paragraph 15 of its report on the Account (A/53/7/Add.1), it recommended that this section of the programme budget be entitled "Supplementary development activities" and that the term "Development Account" be reserved for financing, accounting and auditing purposes for the sake of clarity.

Estimates of income

Income section 1
Income from staff assessment

IS1.1. The Secretary-General estimates $326,945,200 as the amount of staff assessment under expenditure section 32 and under income section 3. The amount of staff assessment not otherwise disposed of by specific resolution of the General Assembly will be credited to the Tax Equalization Fund established by the Assembly in its resolution 973 A (X) of 15 December 1955 for distribution to Member States in accordance with the scale of assessments for the regular budget applicable to the financial year concerned.

IS1.2. The total estimate under income section 1 is $4,745,900 more than the total estimate under section 32 because the former includes income from staff assessment derived from emoluments of staff who are charged to revenue-producing activities under income section 3; on the other hand, the staff assessment paid to such staff is shown under income section 3 rather than under section 32.

IS1.3. The Advisory Committee was informed that differences in rates of growth between section 32 and income section 1 were attributable to a previous overestimation in staff assessment related to staff financed from income section 3. This factor plus post reductions during the biennium 1998–1999 account for differences in rates of growth between salaries and staff assessment as well as decreases in the estimates for 2000–2001 as compared with the actual income received in 1996–1997. In this connection, the Committee requests that in future the actual income received in prior bienniums be shown so as to provide a means of comparison with actual expenditure.

Income section 2
General income

IS2.1. As indicated in tables IS2.1 and IS2.2 of the proposed programme budget, the total estimate of general income for the biennium 2000–2001 amounts to $37,900,000, an increase of $4,314,600 compared with the estimate of $33,585,400 for 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee commends the Secretariat for the measures taken to increase income. In particular, the Committee is pleased to note that the treasury has changed the previous procedure by which the United Nations earned low interest on bank balances. In addition, upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that one of the measures taken involved the installation of new software that enables the treasury to track bank balances more accurately for the purpose of transferring excess funds into interest-bearing accounts.

IS2.2. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that income from rental of premises for Addis Ababa that related to the use of the Conference Centre is estimated at $801,360 for 2000–2001. In this connection, the Committee recalls the recommendation of the Board of Auditors[26] and the related comments of the Committee (see A/53/513, para. 31). The Committee notes the reply by the Secretariat as contained in table IS2.5. However, the concern of the Committee regarding the issue of profitability does not appear to have been addressed. The Committee requests that in the next programme budget the matter be addressed. The Committee further recommends that, pursuant to the relevant provisions of financial regulation 7.1, measures be introduced to ensure sustained financial capacity for ECA and ESCAP to manage income-generating meetings at their respective conference centres.

IS2.3. Upon request, the Advisory Committee received a list of tenants at Headquarters, including those with rent-free premises. With regard to UNITAR rental charges, the

Committee recalls paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 53/195 of 15 December 1998 in which the Assembly called upon the Secretary-General

> "to continue to explore all possible ways and means to provide additional facilities to the Institute for maintaining its offices and for conducting programmes and training courses that are provided at no cost to States and to their representatives accredited to United Nations Offices in New York, Nairobi, Geneva and Vienna".

In this connection, the Committee requests the Secretary-General to provide information in the next budget submission on progress made in the implementation of the above provisions of the resolution.

IS2.4. The Advisory Committee sought additional information concerning the reduction of income from television and similar services. The Committee was informed that a new pricing policy had been introduced. The new arrangement would permit television companies to have access to United Nations programmes free of charge while the United Nations would be allowed free access to the companies' television studios, libraries and the like. The Committee recommends that measures be introduced to assess the extent to which the United Nations is using the facilities that have been offered.

IS2.5. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph IS2.4 that income from the sale of used equipment decreased. Upon request, the Committee was provided with an inventory value of the items sold.

Income section 3
Services to the public

IS3.1. As indicated in table IS3.1 of the proposed programme budget, the estimate for net revenue under income section 3 for the biennium 2000–2001 is projected at $5,590,500, which represents an increase of $1,282,900 over the revised estimates for 1998–1999 of $4,307,600. Revenue-producing activities are carried out at Headquarters and at Geneva and Vienna by the Department of Public Information, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of Central Support Services, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts.

IS3.2. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that sales tax was now being paid on the sale of gift items. The Committee sought further information on the basis for the payment of taxes but received no reply. The Committee expresses concern about the payment of local taxes on items sold in the United Nations building, which is international territory. The Committee requests that the full implications of this development be analysed and that immediate steps be taken to revert to a situation where no such taxes are collected or paid.

IS3.3. In paragraph IS3.28 it is proposed that an outside contractor be engaged to run the bookshop in the Palais des Nations at Geneva. The Advisory Committee welcomes this initiative, which is in line with section II, paragraph 17, of General Assembly resolution 52/220.

IS3.4. However, in the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the case for abolishing the two General Service posts at Geneva as proposed in paragraph IS3.30 seems not to be entirely substantiated, as there would be a need to retain knowledgeable staff able to monitor and supervise the contracted personnel, maintain liaison with the sales section and continue to promote sales, including the preparation of sales catalogues. The Committee requests the Secretary-General to review this situation and to inform the General Assembly of the results during the first part of its fifty-fourth session.

IS3.5. In connection with the catering operations, the Advisory Committee notes the changes reported in paragraph IS3.68. The Committee recommends that immediate steps be taken to ascertain the reasons for deterioration in the quality of service in the Delegates' Dining Room and the cafeteria at Headquarters and the apparent high cost of some items.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/52/7/Rev.1).

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5* and corrigendum (A/53/5 and Corr.1), vol. I, chap. II.

[3] Ibid., *Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/42/7).

[4] Ibid., *Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 7A* (A/38/7/Add.1–23), document A/38/7/Add.16.

[5] Ibid., *Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7A* (A/50/7/Add.1–16), document A/50/7/Add.16.

[6] E/1999/74.

[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 7A* (A/35/7/Add.1–32), document A/35/7/Add.27.

[8] Ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 32* and corrigendum (A/53/32 and Corr.1).

[9] Ibid., *Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/50/7).

[10] Ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/53/6/Rev.1).

[11] Ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/53/5), vol. II, chap. II.

[12] See E/AC.51/1999/L.6/Add.42.

[13] TD/B/EX(14)/3, para. 18.

[14] HS/C/17/2.

[15] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5H* (A/53/5/Add.8).

[16] A/AC.198/1999/5, para. 27.

[17] Ibid., para. 23.

[18] A/AC.198/1999/L.2, para. 32.

[19] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6* and corrigendum (A/51/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1), para. 23.16.

[20] A/AC.198/1999/3.

[21] Ibid., para. 8.

[22] Ibid., paras. 11 and 12.

[23] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/52/6), para. 27F.49.

[24] Ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5* and corrigendum (A/53/5 and Corr.1), vol. I, chap. II, paras. 128–131.

[25] UNEP/GC.20/21, para. 30.

[26] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5* and corrigendum (A/53/5 and Corr.1), vol. I, chap. II, para. 162.

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Administrative expenses of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

Second report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Addendum

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Standing Committee of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board on the administrative expenses of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (A/54/206). During its consideration of this item, the Advisory Committee met with the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Pension Board, the Secretary of the Pension Board and, with regard to investments of the Pension Fund, with the representatives of the Secretary-General.

2. The report of the Standing Committee of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board is submitted pursuant to the decisions of the General Assembly contained in its resolution 46/220 of 20 December 1991. The report includes the revised estimates for the biennium 1998-1999, the budget proposal for the biennium 2000-2001 and a request for authorization for contributions to the Emergency Fund for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/54/206, para. 3).

3. The Advisory Committee welcomes the inclusion of workload indicators in the report; in the future these statistics should be analytically linked to the request for resources. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that efforts be made to streamline the report by having more focused and concise narratives and that a distinction be made between the functions carried out in New York and Geneva. The Committee notes some imprecision in various categories of expenditure with regard to the "recosted" and "current" rates of the resource requirements for the biennium 2000-2001. For example, the resource requirements set out in various paragraphs of section VI of the report represent "recosted" rates and not "current" rates. This should be clarified in the future.

II. Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999

4. The Standing Committee approved the submission to the General Assembly of the revised estimates for expenses chargeable to the Fund for the biennium 1998-1999

amounting to $57,514,000 (A/54/206, paras. 16-21). This includes an increase of $3,282,800, or 6.1 per cent over the revised appropriations of $54,231,200, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/210 of 18 December 1998, and $7,444,500, or 14.9 per cent over the initial budget of $50,069,500 for the biennium 1998-1999 approved by the General Assembly in resolution 52/222 of 22 December 1997.

5. As indicated in paragraphs 22 to 33 and annex II of the report, the additional resources of $3,282,800 relate to additional requirements for the Investment Management Service. These include an increase in advisory and custodial fees of $2,563,100 from $28,600,000 in the approved appropriations for the biennium 1998-1999 to $31,163,100 in the proposed revised estimates for 1998-1999. For the biennium 1998-1999, the revised advisory and custodial fees, based on a flat-fee arrangement, would amount to $14,561,900 million, for small cap funds to $6,208,500 and for custodians to $10,392,700. These two last are based on the market value of assets of the Fund (A/54/206, paras. 25 and 154).

6. The Advisory Committee notes the concern of the Standing Committee (A/54/206, paras. 74 and 75 and 77 (f)) regarding the level of the advisory and custodial fees and the presentation of the fee structure. The Committee notes that the Standing Committee recommended that a substantial change be made in future presentations of the budget estimates under investment costs so as to provide clear indications as to the costing factors utilized, including specific information on the assumptions made.

7. The Advisory Committee recalls that the responsibility for the investment of the assets of the Fund is vested in the Secretary-General, who is advised by the Investments Committee (see A/50/7/Add.1, para. 20). The representative of the Secretary-General informed the Advisory Committee that discussions were under way on possible new arrangements for estimating investment fees. The Committee was further informed that it was likely that not all the investment costs projected for the biennium 2000-2001 would be required in view of the current discussion on alternative arrangements. In this connection, the Advisory Committee concurs with the observations of the Standing Committee that the resources approved for fees could only be used for that purpose and that should there prove to be a reduction in those fees, there should be a corresponding reduction in that budget line (A/54/206, para. 77 (f)).

8. The Advisory Committee recommends that any proposed solution should take into account past experience and an analysis of future trends. The Committee further recommends that no further action be taken by the General Assembly on the level of fees, pending the conclusion of the above discussions between the Secretary-General and the investment advisers.

III. Proposed budget for the biennium 2000-2001

9. As shown in table 1 of the report, the proposed budget for the biennium 2000-2001 amounts to $62,324,900, comprising administrative costs of $18,534,400, investment costs of $42,992,700 and audit costs of $797,800.

10. Administrative costs would increase by $1,385,200 or 8.1 per cent, from $17,149,200 appropriated for the biennium 1998-1999 to $18,534,400 proposed for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/206, table 1). The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 85 of the report that, as a percentage of the total pensionable remuneration for the biennium 2000-2001, administrative costs would represent 0.24 per cent, as compared to 0.23 per cent in the revised administrative costs for the biennium 1998-1999 and 0.21 per cent in the initial administrative costs for 1998-1999. The Committee recalls its concern as to the need to closely monitor increases in these costs (see A/52/519, paras. 21-23). In this connection, the Committee welcomes the intention of the Committee of Actuaries to monitor the actual progression in administrative costs over several years before determining the method and factors to be included in subsequent valuations (A/54/206, para. 88). The Committee was provided, upon request, with a table of annual statistics for the Fund for the years from 1996 to 1998 and a summary of its operations from 1971 to 1998 (see annex I to the present report).

11. For the biennium 2000-2001, under administrative costs, post requirements of the Fund secretariat, as proposed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund to the Standing Committee, would be 119 posts, as compared to 113 posts for 1998-1999 (A/54/207, paras. 67-69). The proposal includes the establishment of six new posts (1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 4 General Service), the conversion of seven temporary assistance-funded positions in the biennium 1998-1999 to established posts for the biennium 2000-2001 (2 P-3 and 5 General Service) and four reclassifications (1 P-5 to D-1 level, 2 P-4 to P-5 level and 1 General Service (other level) to General Service (principal level)).

12. As regards the request for six new posts, the Standing Committee recommended approval of the full quantum of additional resources requested for the new posts, but in the

form of general temporary assistance resources rather than new established posts, with specific earmarking as to the use of some of the additional temporary assistance funds (A/54/206, para. 77 (d)). For two of the posts proposed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund (1 P-3 in the Executive Office and 1 General Service in Executive Direction and Management), the Standing Committee discouraged the allocation of resources since they did not directly impact on the operational servicing functions of the Fund, but recommended that the resources for the posts be made available for further work on information technology and process re-engineering, subject to the Board's review of the strategic plan (A/54/206, para. 77 (d)). Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a table, shown as annex II to the present report, summarizing the proposals of the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund and the posts recommended by the Standing Committee.

13. The Advisory Committee notes that, of the four posts proposed for reclassification, three have been reclassified at the proposed level by the Office of Human Resources Management (A/54/206, para. 77 (e)). With respect to the fourth post, the Committee understands that the Office of Human Resources Management has concluded that the classification of the post of database administrator in the Information Management Systems Section should be maintained at the P-4 level. The Committee was informed that the proposed administrative costs would be reduced by $23,800 for the biennium.

14. In view of the observations of the Standing Committee in paragraphs 77 (c) and 77 (d) of its report, the Advisory Committee recommends that the need for the permanent establishment of the four new posts recommended by the Standing Committee (1 P-4 and 3 General Service) and the possible authorization of two additional posts requested by the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund (1 P-3 and 1 General Service) be further examined upon the implementation of the recommendation of the Standing Committee in paragraph 77 (c). Pursuant to that recommendation, the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund was requested to provide a strategic plan to the next Board session that would address the inside and outside factors impacting the Fund's operations, and would provide an indication of the objectives and how to achieve them, including time-lines and milestones; he was also requested to provide a clear framework for the transfer of functions and the redeployment of posts from New York to Geneva (A/54/206, para. 77 (c)).

15. The Advisory Committee notes also that further enhancement of the role of the United Nations Office at Geneva would have to continue to be pursued in a phased manner (A/54/206, para. 45). In the view of the Committee, there is a need to be more transparent about the staff and non-staff costs for the Office at Geneva and the benefits of the transfer of functions from New York to Geneva. The Committee therefore believes that, before making further redeployments, a qualitative and quantitative analysis should be made of the cost-effectiveness of such transfers and staff redeployments. In this connection, the Committee agrees with the statement in paragraph 47 of the report, that any redeployments and the consequent revision of the staffing and other resources for the Geneva Office would be pursued over the next two biennia, with adjustments along the way in the light of experience.

16. As regards computer systems and operations, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Fund was satisfied with the services currently provided by the International Computing Centre at Geneva (A/54/206, paras. 51-58). The Board and the Standing Committee, however, had requested a study of options, including remaining with the International Computing Centre, self-reliance, using in-house client/server technology, or contracting out. The Committee is of the view that as long as the Centre is offering services that satisfy the Fund's needs, a change should only be made after careful examination of factors, such as the short and long-term capacity of the Centre, the short and long-term needs of the Fund and the related costs of the various options that are considered.

17. The issue of the Fund's office space in New York and Geneva is addressed in paragraphs 59-61 of the Standing Committee's report. Under the revised United Nations/Joint Staff Pension Fund cost-sharing arrangements, applied as from 1 January 1999, two thirds of the costs of space occupied by the secretariat of the Fund and the full cost of the space occupied by the Investment Management Service are charged to the Fund. As indicated in paragraph 59 and annex V of the report, during the biennium 1998-1999, the Fund occupied 24,170 square feet in New York (17,694 sq. feet for its secretariat and 6,476 sq. feet for the Investment Management Service) and 153 square metres in the United Nations Office at Geneva, for a total cost of $530,000. During the biennium 2000-2001, the Fund would occupy 26,061 square feet in New York (18,850 sq. feet for its secretariat and 7,211 sq. feet for the Investment Management Service) and 382.3 square metres, at a total cost of $1,402,400.

18. The Advisory Committee notes that it is the intention to maintain the Fund's administrative and investment operations together in New York and that additional space would be provided on the fifth and sixth floors of the Secretariat building, as soon as arrangements are made to

relocate the current occupants (A/54/206, para. 61). In view of the possibility of using new technology, the necessity to have the Fund's offices contiguous should be re-examined. In the opinion of the Committee, the growth in rental charges should be monitored and other options explored with a view to determining the best long-term solution. The Committee also requests that in future presentations of office space requirements comparable space measurement units be used, according to standards used in the United Nations.

19. The Advisory Committee also notes that the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund intends to pursue further the matter of delegation of personnel and procurement decisions (A/54/206, paras. 62-64). As the Fund does not have its own machinery for personnel and procurement actions, it utilizes the machinery established for those purposes by the United Nations, while safeguarding its separate and independent status, as an inter-agency entity, with its own Chief Executive Officer. The Advisory Committee was informed that the Fund had pursued and obtained approval of an arrangement under which the decisions on procurement matters would be taken by the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund, after considering the views and recommendations of the Procurement Division or the Committee on Contracts, rather than having those recommendations sent for decision to the official to whom the Secretary-General, as Chief Administrative Officer of the United Nations, has delegated such authority in respect of United Nations procurement. In the area of personnel decisions, arrangements similar to those followed in respect of procurement actions are being sought by the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund, including explicit inclusion in policies and procedures of the Office of Human Resources Management that recommendations of the United Nations appointment and promotion bodies with respect to personnel in the Fund secretariat are to be addressed to the Fund's Chief Executive Officer and recognition of the authority of the Fund to take decisions regarding the hiring of consultants and short-term staff, in accordance with the established procedures of the United Nations.

20. In this connection, it is the view of the Advisory Committee that delegation of authority should be based on the need to recognize the special status of the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund vis-à-vis the Secretariat of the United Nations and those of member organizations of the Fund.

21. The question of possible outsourcing to the secretariat of the Fund of local pension secretariat services now being provided by member organizations other than the United Nations is commented upon in paragraphs 65 and 66 of the Standing Committee's report. The Advisory Committee cautions against hasty decisions regarding this subject since the advantages and disadvantages of changing the current arrangements have yet to be examined carefully and in depth by the secretariats and legislative bodies of member organizations of the Fund.

22. Audit costs are discussed in paragraphs 10, 77 (g) and 164 to 166 of the Standing Committee's report. Under the revised United Nations/Joint Staff Pension Fund cost-sharing arrangements, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/210 of 18 December 1998, for the biennium 2000-2001, one third of the audit costs that concern the administrative area are to be borne by the United Nations and the balance by the Fund. Total audit costs (internal and external) show an increase from $620,500, appropriated for the biennium 1998-1999, to $797,800, estimated for the biennium 2000-2001, a 28.6 per cent increase.

23. The Advisory Committee recalls that, under the revised cost-sharing formula between the United Nations and the Fund, the expected additional costs to be borne by the Fund amounted to $730,800 for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/53/511, para. 20). The Committee requests that in future budget submissions the additional costs to be borne by the Fund as a result of the application of the one-third/two-thirds formula (whereby one third of the costs are borne by the United Nations and two thirds by the Fund) be clearly indicated for the three major components of administrative expenses of the Fund, namely administrative costs, investment costs and audit costs.

24. Based on the comments and observations set out above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the appropriation for administrative expenses of the Fund be approved in the amounts of $57,514,000 for the biennium 1998-1999 and $62,301,100 for the biennium 2000-2001, taking into account a reduction of $23,800 for the exclusion of the reclassification of the post of database administrator to the P-5 level for the reasons given in paragraph 13 above. Furthermore, the Committee has no objection to the proposal by the Standing Committee to supplement the voluntary contributions to the Emergency Fund by an amount not exceeding $200,000 for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/206, paras. 167-170).

Annex I

Annual statistics (1996-1998) and summary of operations (1971-1998) of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

Table 1

Annual statistics for United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund operations

		1996	*1997*	*1998*
		(millions of United States dollars)		
A.	Market value of assets	16 913.4	18 526.3	21 795.9
B.	Principal of the Fund	13 312.1	14 002.8	14 690.8
C.	Contribution income	800.7	787.5	801.8
D.	Benefit costs	915.0	883.7	928.0
E.	C minus D	(114.3)	(96.2)	(126.2)
F.	Number of participants	67 997	67 740	67 971
G.	Number of periodic benefits	41 433	43 149	44 633
H.	Ratio F:G	1.6:1	1.6:1	1.5:1
I.	Staffing (number)[a]	136	136	138
J.	Administrative expenses (including investment costs)	21 293.6	23 147.2	27 807.6

[a] Includes staff of the Investment Management Service.

Table 2

Summary of the operation of the Fund: 1971 through 1998

1	2	3	4	5	6		7
					Annual withdrawal settlements[b]		
Year ending	*Assets in US$ - Principal of the Fund*	*Number of participants*	*Cumulative number of periodic benefits*	*Cumulative cost of periodic benefits US$*	*A: US$*	*B: Total*	*Total posts*[c]
Sept. 1971	622 011 280	34 860	5 303	14 655 927	5 485 473	2 746	39
Sept. 1972	712 062 485	36 768	5 894	19 010 212	6 184 851	2 683	46
Dec. 1973[a]	829 475 720	38 089	7 155	35 038 609	10 595 192	4 117	47
Dec. 1974	923 444 687	39 451	8 155	35 004 202	9 277 967	3 369	49
Dec. 1975	1 089 776 538	42 592	9 070	45 395 136	8 375 721	2 762	58
Dec. 1976	1 256 118 846	42 917	10 515	59 663 179	12 660 692	3 797	68
Dec. 1977	1 417 568 515	43 176	12 067	81 075 016	13 064 798	3 450	73
Dec. 1978	1 624 475 731	33 983	13 276	100 368 107	11 628 131	2 747	76
Dec. 1979	1 885 906 941	46 904	14 486	117 674 480	13 472 340	3 090	80
Dec. 1980	2 171 470 086	49 098	15 937	160 843 568	16 327 928	3 359	85
Dec. 1981	2 479 987 598	51 048	17 357	186 101 336	17 910 323	3 254	93
Dec. 1982	2 790 412 267	50 966	19 178	228 181 202	28 723 251	4 029	93
Dec. 1983	3 129 628 492	52 432	20 899	252 591 270	26 765 762	3 565	94
Dec. 1984	3 527 190 756	53 204	22 378	290 221 921	30 091 393	3 577	95
Dec. 1985	4 168 672 825	54 013	23 965	319 624 061	28 668 212	3 365	100
Dec. 1986	5 092 134 823	54 289	25 434	345 500 824	31 075 697	3 414	101
Dec. 1987	6 123 937 518	53 967	26 920	367 682 618	33 637 140	3 522	101
Dec. 1988	6 877 603 614	54 006	28 362	390 556 680	35 883 073	3 638	107
Dec. 1989	7 626 808 601	56 222	29 566	404 586 091	31 944 228	3 009	107
Dec. 1990	8 529 311 600	58 263	30 901	474 157 321	35 260 509	3 730	115
Dec. 1991	9 349 146 243	60 183	32 294	515 588 120	37 025 389	3 467	115
Dec. 1992	10 380 471 469	61 968	33 923	579 816 190	36 351 949	3 635	122
Dec. 1993	11 250 266 475	63 329	35 435	606 559 593	40 605 148	4 165	128
Dec. 1994	11 927 849 903	63 813	37 156	680 475 301	49 313 730	4 419	128
Dec. 1995	12 658 414 333	68 708	38 914	745 980 412	40 555 022	4 055	128
Dec. 1996	13 312 103 653	67 997	41 433	845 935 032	69 138 165	5 622	136
Dec. 1997	14 063 184 748	67 740	43 149	826 055 364	57 662 126	5 900	136
Dec. 1998	14 732 146 814	67 971	44 633	870 512 706	57 467 751	5 674	138

[a] Long year due to change in fiscal year effective 1 January 1974.

[b] Includes transfers under agreements.

[c] Breakdown of posts, including posts in the Investment Management Section, is provided in table 3.

Table 3
Summary of the operation of the Fund: 1971 through 1998

	Established posts				*Temporary posts*			
	Administrative		*Investments*		*Administrative*			
Year ending	*Professional*	*General Service*	*Professional*	*General Service*	*Professional*	*General Service*	*Total established posts*	*Total posts*
Sept 1971	10	23	0	0	1	5	33	39
Dec 1972	10	23	3	4	1	5	40	46
Dec 1973	11	23	3	4	1	5	41	47
Dec 1974	11	25	3	4	1	5	43	49
Dec 1975	15	28	3	5	0	7	51	58
Dec 1976	13	29	5	4	5	12	51	68
Dec 1977	16	31	5	4	4	13	56	73
Dec 1978	18	32	5	4	4	13	59	76
Dec 1979	22	42	5	4	2	5	73	80
Dec 1980	23	44	5	4	2	7	76	85
Dec 1981	25	54	5	4	1	4	88	93
Dec 1982	25	54	5	4	1	4	88	93
Dec 1983	25	54	5	5	1	4	89	94
Dec 1984	26	58	5	6	0	0	95	95
Dec 1985	26	61	6	7	0	0	100	100
Dec 1986	27	60	6	8	0	0	101	101
Dec 1987	27	60	6	8	0	0	101	101
Dec 1988	28	59	7	10	1	2	104	107
Dec 1989	28	59	7	10	1	2	104	107
Dec 1990	30	62	9	14	0	0	115	115
Dec 1991	30	62	9	14	0	0	115	115
Dec 1992	32	66	9	15	0	0	122	122
Dec 1993	33	70	9	15	0	1	127	128
Dec 1994	33	70	9	15	0	1	127	128
Dec 1995	33	70	9	15	0	1	127	128
Dec 1996	34	72	12	18	0	0	136	136
Dec 1997	34	72	12	18	0	0	136	136
Dec 1998	34	72	12	20	0	0	138	138

Annex II

Post requirements proposed by the Chief Executive Officer of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and post requirements recommended by the Standing Committee of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board

Table 1

Post requirements under administrative costs proposed by the Chief Executive Officer/Secretary

	Established posts		*Temporary assistance*		*Total*	
	1998-1999	*2000-2001*	*1998-1999*	*2000-2001*	*1998-1999*	*2000-2001*
Professional category and above						
Equivalent to ASG	1	1	0	0	1	1
D-1	2	3	0	0	2	3
P-5	5	6	0	0	5	6
P-4/3	25	27	2	0	27	27
P-2/1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Subtotal	**34**	**38**	**2**	**0**	**36**	**38**
General Service category						
Principal level	4	6	0	0	4	6
Other level	68	75	5	0	73	75
Subtotal	**72**	**81**	**5**	**0**	**77**	**81**
Grand Total	**106**	**119**	**7**	**0**	**113**	**119**

Table 2
Post requirements under administrative costs as recommended by the Standing Committee

	Established posts		*Temporary assistance*		*Total*	
	1998-1999	*2000-2001*	*1998-1999*	*2000-2001*	*1998-1999*	*2000-2001*
Professional category and above						
Equivalent to ASG	1	1	0	0	1	1
D-1	2	3	0	0	2	3
P-5	5	6	0	0	5	6
P-4/3	25	25	2	1	27	26
P-2/1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Subtotal	**34**	**36**	**2**	**1**	**36**	**37**
General Service category						
Principal level	4	5	0	1	4	6
Other level	68	72	5	2	73	74
Subtotal	**72**	**77**	**5**	**3**	**77**	**80**
Grand Total	**106**	**113**	**7**	**4**	**113**	**117**